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ABSTRACT

The role of the local school board in delivering quality education is examined in this booklet, which provides a set of expectations and principles for drastic change in the role and operation of school boards. Now that fundamental, systemic change is being called for, the performance of school boards is under greater scrutiny. Following the preface and introduction, chapter 1 analyzes national trends in changes external to schooling and new demands placed upon schools and their boards by business and other leadership sectors. The interrelationships between education and other children's services for children's success are also explored. Chapter 2 examines reform strategies of the 1980s, particularly those implemented by Kentucky and Chicago. The major theme of these reforms was the intensification of the existing system rather than restructuring. Chapter 3 discusses state-local relations, and the fourth chapter presents governance lessons from Canada, Great Britain, and Japan. The fifth chapter presents findings of a survey conducted from 1988-90 of 266 school boards from 16 states. Superintendents from 128 of the districts completed a questionnaire. The results indicate that local boards are weakest in the areas necessary for effectiveness in changed school systems. Chapter 6 offers conclusions and recommendations for improving board performance and endorses state action that changes the roles and responsibilities of local boards. One figure, 15 tables, and chapter endnotes are included. (Contains 61 references.) (LMI)

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GOVERNING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NEW TIMES NEW REQUIREMENTS

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On behalf of the Institute for Educational Leadership, we should like to thank the Joyce, W. K. Kellogg, and Danforth Foundations for their support during the development and demonstration of the IEL School Board Effectiveness Program referenced in Chapter Five. We thank the Danforth Foundation especially for its continuing interest in and support of IEL's work in education governance reform.

Anne Lewis, accomplished education author and analyst, edited our manuscript. She deserves major credit for turning our collective writing into a book.

Jacqueline P. Danzberger
Michael W. Kirst
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Washington, D.C.

If an educational system that allows thousands of independent local school boards to run schools was a good one, one might reasonably expect that at least one of those fifteen thousand systems could turn out high-school graduates whose achievement scores could match those of Europe or Japan. None can.

. . . locally elected school boards have had a direct incentive to cater to the lowest common denominator when it comes to setting standards. No substantial fraction of the students can be flunked, whatever their performance. If they were flunked, a different school board would be elected. Teachers would be fired.

Lester Thurow
Head To Head
William Morrow & Co., 1992, 261–262

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PREFACE

The urgency for education reform created by *A Nation At Risk* in 1983 and by subsequent calls to arms forced the eruption of a volley of shots fired in the general direction of schools. The business community joined statehouses and governors, the media and the philanthropic world in sincere attempts to revive the past excellence we had perceived in our elementary and secondary education systems.

With hope and, perhaps, naivete, we aimed at curriculum and at budgets; we examined teachers and tested students; we scrutinized teacher education and drop-out prevention; and today we are examining national standards and state policies. All of these efforts have been important, even if they have not produced the outcomes we sought. We have discovered the complexity involved in changing our American system of schooling and are better prepared to take the next steps in education reform.

Governing Public Schools proposes a very important next step for us to take: an honest evaluation of the role of local school boards in delivering quality education to every child.

If we truly believe that the personal and academic success of our children will determine the future political and economic competitiveness of this country, then local education governing boards face enormous responsibilities and require extremely high levels of knowledge and insight. They demand levels of leadership that must transcend local politics and special interests. Their constituency becomes the national community rather than the school community that elected them.

Such connectedness between each child's success and our country's success should compel us to ask the tough questions about how school boards will respond to the challenge, or whether they can respond effectively. We cannot be shy about looking at the successes and failures of 15,000 local systems of education that drive our national competitiveness. We must realistically assess how the roles and responsibilities of these boards and their individual members can be supported and redefined to achieve our objectives.

The sensitivity of the questions and the answers should not derive from the personalities or politics of those who serve. Indeed the delicacy of the issue derives from our long tradition and commitment to local control and to representativeness in government. We are not challenged to forego those ideals, but we are challenged to make them work to the advantage of every child.

As we begin to examine the issue of school governance, we should be mindful of the lessons learned thus far in the reform movement. There is no single cause of our problems. Reform efforts must continue on all fronts. We especially must recognize that there is no one perfect model. What works in Ann Arbor may not work in Atlanta. We have the creativity and the incentive to make our diversity work for us. All we need is the commitment to work together.

John L. Clendenin

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
BellSouth Corporation and
Chairman, Committee for
Economic Development

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Local school governance, largely untouched by the nation's education reform agenda, has become critical to it.

Now that fundamental, systemic change is being called for, the performance of school boards is under greater scrutiny, especially in urban areas.

Six years ago, the Institute for Educational Leadership issued a report of concern about school board leadership, *School Boards: Strengthening Grass Roots Leadership.* It was received politely by the school board community and other policymakers, but it did not create much momentum for change. Since then, however, the concern about local school boards has escalated, with the reasons ranging from a view that it is simply governance's turn for attention to a belief that local governance holds the key to producing excellence in public education. And, there is also concern that the lack of effective local leadership shuts the door on improving student outcomes.

As long as the education reform agenda focused on doing more of the same within the existing structure for schooling, school boards could coast on their traditions. Now that fundamental, systemic change is being called for, the performance of school boards is under greater scrutiny, especially in urban areas.

Our ultimate objective in this new volume is to provide a set of expectations and principles for drastic change in the role and operations of school boards. We are convinced that there is no one best governance system for all the diverse local contexts in this country. However, there are numerous urgent specific changes needed in how we govern the nation's schools.

True, school boards are not the only institutions in need of significant change. Nor is our rationale for changes in governance based solely on the performance of existing school boards, although our data demonstrate that many problems of public education stem from their behavior. More fundamentally, we contend the external environment around schools and school boards has been so altered that the current structure, role, and operations of school boards are not sufficient to meet the new challenges.

This is not particularly surprising because the last major overhaul of school governance occurred between 1900 and 1920. School boards are in large part still organized and focused on issues more appropriate for a turn-of-the-century era when they were expected to oversee and determine the operational and fiduciary responsibilities of schools. Policy issues in those days were different, and many school districts were much smaller and less diverse. The idea that their actions impacted upon the country's global competitiveness would have been ludicrous to school board members of even just a few decades ago.

School boards are in large part still organized and focused on issues more appropriate for a turn-of-the-century era.

Those who defend the *status quo* of school governance hark to this historical contribution and to the ideal of representative democracy embodied in school governance. Questioning the current effectiveness of school boards does not deny their historic role or deny the importance of citizen control of public schools. Not to question their performance, however, denies the effect of massive changes outside of schooling.

Initially, this volume analyzes these external changes, including the striking increase in child poverty, family disorganization, and youth violence. We look at new demands placed upon schools and school boards by business and other leadership sectors. We explore the interrelationships between education and other children's services that are essential if children are to succeed in school.

We then move to the legacy of the 1980s' reforms, one in which the major strategy was the intensification of the existing system rather than restructuring. In that era, school boards were not a major concern; many state initiatives bypassed them, although some actually extended boards' opportunities to exercise leadership.

The 1980 reform efforts, however, were disappointing. More fundamental changes were proposed, such as in Kentucky. National—though not specifically federal—initiatives began to transform school board agendas in the early 1990s. We evaluate their potential impact upon school governance, as well as new brands of state strategies. We also look at school governance structures in three other countries where the local influence is somewhat synonymous to that in the United States—and the changes taking place in these countries.

Our concern about school board dysfunction is based in large part upon the IEL data base of boards' self-evaluations by their members. This chapter points out that board members believe they are weakest in the precise areas and functions necessary for their effectiveness in changed circumstances, such as instructional policy or links with other community leadership. We believe this mismatch is caused in part by state requirements that focus boards on the wrong agendas.

Board members believe they are weakest in the precise areas and functions necessary for their effectiveness in changed circumstances.

Finally, we include our views about some appropriate expectations and principles for improving school board performance. States hold the opportunities and authority for improvements in school governance. Local boards, however, could do much on their own to improve their status and influence and to bring about better support and outcomes for students. However, we do seriously question whether the institution of school boards can reform itself.

A national dialogue about emerging roles for local school boards began in early 1992 with the publication of *Facing the Challenge*, a report from a task force of the Twentieth Century Fund and the Danforth Foundation. That report would leave the basic governance structure in place but have states change the roles and responsibilities of school boards so that they become true policy boards. This volume endorses such state action. We also call for a broader dialogue about school governance in which there are no assumptions other than a recognition that a one-best-governance structure may not be viable. In 1993, the Committee for Economic Development will publish its recommendations from a Subcommittee on Education Governance, Management and Organization.

Thus, in little more than a year, three major reports urging governance reform will have been published. All of them are strong testimonials to the need for change. All give concrete advice on how to make school boards relevant in today's context. And all affirm that new traditions of leadership can be created without losing the nation's historic commitment to the public's voice in public education.

CHAPTER ONE

NATIONAL TRENDS, NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The economic transformations under way worldwide force both the general public and political and business leaders to focus on the nation's schools and how they are governed. Everyone seems to agree that the education received by American children will have a tremendous bearing on the country's economic viability and, consequently, on its political status as a world power. Meanwhile, profound demographic changes in the United States are making the population ever more culturally pluralistic and the role of the schools even more complex.

The education received by American children will have a tremendous bearing on the country's economic viability and, consequently, on its political status as a world power.

We no longer have a closed system of school politics whereby professional educators and their allies dominate the governance structure. School problems and issues now have great public saliency. Political and business leaders are increasingly engaged with them. One thesis of this volume is that school boards will have to share the educational policymaking process more than they have in the past because education has become of such preeminent national importance.

In other words, the trend in education governance is to broaden the base of lay involvement, with more and more influence being exercised by those outside the established educational community (governors, parents, legislators, civic leaders, business elites). These new circumstances present school board members with a unique opportunity to demonstrate their leadership by brokering the involvement of these powerful new lay forces in school affairs. Boards will need to be flexible and expand their perspectives to encompass a broader definition of education and schooling.

We believe four developments will dictate a broadened base of lay involvement in educational policymaking: demographic imperatives; intensified involvement of the business community; the concomitant interest of the political community; and the need for new collaborative approaches to address changing demographic realities.

National Trends

Demographic Imperatives

There is little question that the growing incidence of poverty among children and their families will require schools and educational leaders to develop closer working relationships with other social and human service providers. Indeed, we now know that early pre-school interventions in the lives of poor children will greatly improve their prospects of becoming capable learners once their formal schooling starts.

The growing incidence of poverty among children and their families will require schools and educational leaders to develop closer working relationships with other social and human service providers.

Recent reports have documented the dramatic increase in the poverty rate among young children.[1] At a time when there is a decline in poverty among all other age groups, the poverty rate for children under six years of age is rising. Findings about the growing poverty of the next generation of students have far-reaching implications for school board members and others who make education policy.

Such findings from the Children's Defense Fund and others affirm that the nation's poorest citizens are its youngest. The 23 percent poverty rate for children under six is greater than for any other age group and more than double the rate for adults; it is up from 17 percent in 1968. Five million young children live in families below the poverty line, which in 1987 was defined as an annual income of $11,611 for a family of four. Fifty percent of Black children and 40 percent of Hispanic children under age six are in this poverty category. Of the five million poor children in 1987, 2.1 million were white, 1.6 million were Black, 1 million were Hispanic, and 300,000 were from other minorities such as Asian or Native American.

The litany of problems commonly associated with school children from low-income families is all too familiar. These children are more likely to be low achievers, repeat grades, drop out, engage in delinquent and criminal behavior, become

unwed teen parents, be welfare dependent, and earn less if employed.

Numerous studies dispel a number of myths about poverty. For example, most poverty-afflicted households are not comprised of "welfare-cheats." Indeed, most of the families of poor children had at least one parent working; welfare was the exclusive source of income in only 25 percent of poor households. Thus, in most cases the parents of poor children are employed and attempting to be economically self-sufficient.

Another myth is that poverty is largely a phenomenon of the big cities. The reality is that more than one-half of the youngsters living in poverty reside in suburbs or rural areas. The poverty of children, then, is a pervasive national problem confronting all types of school districts. The 1990 Census data reaffirm this disturbing reality.

The escalating problems of children's poverty and their serious ramifications for schools are exacerbated by the growing diversity of the nation's population.

The United States has a higher child poverty rate than virtually any other industrialized country. The situation is even worse if the statistics include the numerous children living in near poverty. Most of us would agree that the Census Bureau's definition of the poverty line as an income of $11,611 for a family of four is a minimal existence income level. Family earnings above the poverty line, particularly in more costly metropolitan areas, often are hardly sufficient and place hundreds of thousands of additional children in economically marginal conditions. Living just above the poverty line produces other hardships, such as ineligibilities for some kinds of noncash assistance. Thus, approximately one-third of the nation's pre-school youngsters will enter school with few of the advantages and the "learning readiness" characteristics enjoyed by more privileged youngsters.

The escalating problems of children's poverty and their serious ramifications for schools are exacerbated by the growing diversity of the nation's population. 1990 Census data indicate that from 1980 to 1990 while the total U.S. population grew 9.8 percent and the white, non-Hispanic only 6 percent, minority populations increased much more dramatically (Black 13.2 percent, Native American 37.9 percent, Hispanic 53 percent, and Asian or Pacific Islander 107.8 percent). Minorities in 1990 constituted 25 percent of the total population and approximately 35 percent of the school age population. The growth of

minority populations will persist and the schools will be expected to educate increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

The Implications

What, then, are the implications of these demographic realities? The schools will need to reconfigure services to meet better the needs of disadvantaged or language minority children and their families as they become an ever larger proportion of schools' clients. Schools are the single most important contact in the everyday lives of families and are the logical institutions for serving as the hub of a comprehensive set of crucial social, health, and educational services. Indeed, the 24th Annual Gallup Phi Delta Kappa Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, released in the late summer of 1992, indicates that 77 percent of the respondents favor the idea of using schools as centers for the provision of health and social welfare services, 87 percent support keeping schools open for after-school use, and 72 percent favor keeping schools open during vacation periods.

The traditional walls separating schools and general government will have to be broken down if the social, health, and educational needs of these students are to be met.

If schools are to coordinate such services, new patterns of public finance must evolve. New and closer relationships will have to be established with other public and private agencies. Also, as we will discuss, the traditional walls separating schools and general government will have to be broken down if the social, health, and educational needs of these students are to be met. Unhealthy children cannot learn as well as healthy ones.

The Intensified Involvement of the Business Community

The recent involvement of the business community in public school issues should be welcome news for school board members and other educational leaders. The demographic changes just described have eroded the political base of support for education. With less than 20 percent of all households currently having school-age children and with the school-age population increasingly made up of minorities and the economically disadvantaged, the considerable political influence of the business community becomes singularly important.

Some school board members and educators are apprehensive and skeptical about the growing involvement of the private sector in school issues. They fear the development of an overemphasis on workplace skills that could distort the curriculum and/or a quick fix attitude by business leaders.

It is too early to tell whether the private sector's involvement in and commitment to education will succeed. Demographic and political realities, however, make it abundantly clear that supporters of public education will need all the political help they can possibly muster. They should not be inordinately turf-conscious. For example, national and state policymaking already is running into the age gap. The increasingly influential American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), with more than 30 million members (second only to the Catholic Church in organizational membership), represents a growing political constituency dedicated to preserving the benefits of senior citizens. Indeed, one out of every four registered voters is an AARP member.

The political muscle and involvement of the private sector will be essential to public education.

These demographic realities lead many observers of the political scene to contend that the political muscle and involvement of the private sector will be essential to public education. The recent involvement of the prestigious Business Roundtable, representing the chief executive officers of the nation's 201 largest corporations, is potentially of great importance. Under the leadership of IBM's chairman, the Roundtable has committed itself to a 10-year, state-by-state program to restructure schools. A group of major corporations will each adopt a state and work to reform its schools. The corporations in each of these states plan to work closely with the governors and other political leaders in achieving common goals concerning school improvement and reform.

Other important national business groups also are actively engaged in school issues. The Committee for Economic Development, with its three influential reports, *Investing in Our Children* (1985), *Children in Need* (1987), and the *Unfinished Agenda* (1992), has made a compelling case for business involvement and support of additional resources for schools, particularly in the preschool years. Other influential national business groups like the National Alliance of Business and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently have created centers which focus on education and related issues. Late in 1989, eight major business

groups created the Business Coalition for Education Reform with the purpose of working "to elevate the dialogue on the need for changes in education policies at the national, state and local levels. . . ." The Coalition includes the: National Alliance of Business, Committee for Economic Development, Business Roundtable, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, Conference Board, American Business Conference, and U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Relationships between these new players and the traditional leaders of education are not yet well formed. There is understandable tension, ambiguity, and uncertainty among all parties. It is much too early to assess such long-range interventions, but the mere initiation of national efforts reflects a seriousness of purpose that cannot be underestimated.

The unprecedented engagement of the nation's highest elected officials in school issues has implicitly derogated the traditional education governance structure.

The Intensified Involvement of the Political Community

The nation's most influential political leaders, like their counterparts in the business world, also have become involved in unprecedented ways in education issues. The highly visible education summit attended by President George Bush and the nation's governors at Charlottesville, Virginia in the fall of 1989 symbolized the new importance of education as a national issue. Indeed, Democratic Presidential nominee, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, was Chairman of the National Governors' Association at the time. The nation's political leaders committed themselves to the establishment of national education goals. The motivating force behind their involvement was analogous to that of their private sector counterparts: they were concerned about the capacity of the country's public schools to produce a workforce capable of competing in an international economy.

In the public's mind, the unprecedented engagement of the nation's highest elected officials in school issues has implicitly derogated the traditional education governance structure. State education department officials, school administrators, school teachers, and certainly school board members have all felt preempted by the dramatic interventions of highly visible political leaders.

The 1980s, for example, were an unprecedented period for extensive state educational reform initiatives on the part of governors and legislators. Thousands of bills were introduced (over 1,000 proposals were offered concerning teacher licensure and compensation alone between 1980 and 1986), over 40 new state testing provisions were implemented by the mid-1980s, state aid was increased, and efforts to change the structure of classrooms and the nature of teaching were undertaken in most jurisdictions.[2] These state-local efforts by political influentials will persist in the 1990s as the movement to achieve the national education goals continues unabated.[3]

Implicitly or explicitly many "outside" reformers see the educational establishment as being part of the problem of the nation's educational crisis. That is one reason why governors, their education aides, and state legislators have joined business leaders in seizing the initiative in educational policy-making all over the country.

Without the political support and active involvement of such leadership, public education could be financially and politically crippled.

These pressures may lead to even more radical reforms at the national level, such as the development of national assessments or standards that may well drive the curriculum in our heretofore decentralized educational governance system. Only the federal government is in a position, for example, given its research and development capacity, to tackle the complex, volatile, and extremely important issue of testing.

Although, in the short range, traditional educational leaders may be understandably uncomfortable and even somewhat resentful of the recent encroachments by business and political leaders, they need to keep the bigger political and demographic picture and realities very much in mind. Without the political support and active involvement of such leadership, public education could be financially and politically crippled.

The Need for New Collaborative Approaches

As we have stressed, the dramatic demographic changes of recent years and the startling high poverty rate among young children necessitate profound changes in how our education and human service delivery systems operate. With at least one-third of the youngsters under six growing up economically disadvantaged, we must reconfigure the financing and gover-

nance of our schools and human services. Children and their families need to be supported by comprehensive, integrated education and social service systems. Further, although the needs of children may be particularly acute in poverty-ridden core cities, the data we cited earlier indicate that large numbers of suburban and rural youngsters also require special medical, nutritional, child-care, after-school, and related services.

Because public schools are physically located in virtually every neighborhood, they provide a logical infrastructure around which to build collaborative services. School leadership, particularly that of lay school board members, should anchor the building of collaborative systems that will more effectively meet the special needs of contemporary children and their families. It will not be easy to break down the separatism between education and general government embedded in law, politics, tradition and training programs. For example, school board elections commonly are held at different times from general elections, and school legislation usually can be found in discrete sections of state statutes. Separate training programs and specialized accreditation and certification practices also separate professional educators from others who provide public human and social services.

The extension of services based in or associated with schools will help broaden the involvement of the community in the schools.

We contend that the demographic imperatives of the 1990s will override these barriers. New approaches will shatter the historical isolation and insulation of schools from general government and the political mainstream. The fundamental question is: will school leaders seize the opportunities and lead the discussion and debate about how the relationship between schools and general government can be reconfigured, or will they be reactive and defensive on terms initiated by others, as has been the case so often in the several waves of school reform?

As lay elected leaders, school boards are in a stronger position to negotiate arrangements with other elected officials and public agencies than are professional employees who are often transient and more concerned about maintaining the existing system. Politically, the extension of services based in or associated with schools will help broaden the involvement of the community in the schools.

On the Cutting Edge

Examples of such collaborations between schools and other agencies have surfaced in diverse communities throughout the country in recent years.

In Los Angeles, for example, the Focus on Youth Program concentrates on dropout prevention. The partners in the program include the public school system, the not-for-profit Los Angeles Education Partnership, and community social service agencies which have developed multidisciplinary school-based case-management teams in a number of elementary and secondary schools. Designed to help connect students to services ranging from family and pregnancy counseling, to gang diversion and health and child care, the program has had promising early results. The dropout rate for participating students declined to about 10 percent as compared with the Los Angeles district's overall dropout rate of 35 percent. Of particular interest is the new expectation built into the job descriptions of principals in several regions in the Los Angeles district. They are to develop mechanisms to coordinate the social services available to the children in their schools.

These few examples reflect a collaborative thrust that will be burgeoning in the years immediately ahead. School boards have a unique opportunity to be in the vanguard of this inevitable national movement.

The Cleveland Public Schools are also involved in a number of interagency initiatives. In one collaboration, schools work with a neighborhood community center and a local university to coordinate family-based literacy services. The school system also provides family-life education classes in cooperation with Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority at 30 sites with its own taxing authority. Composed of 11 member agencies including schools, the park system, libraries, and other institutions, the program aims to mobilize existing resources to inspire and empower youth.

In Lester County, Michigan, where services are limited as they are in most rural communities, 14 small school districts send needy students to a family learning center where special services are provided to pregnant teens and their families. This center operates the only licensed public day-care program in the region and serves as a coordinating body for education, health, labor, housing, and youth services in the area. In Indiana, Floyd County has joined with five other counties in the rural southern part of the state to develop a regional legislative education and information network strong enough to project youth issues as a priority on the state policymaking agenda.

Kentucky and New Jersey are promoting collaboration between education and other social service agencies. Kentucky's Department of Education and the multi-department Cabinet of Human Resources (including the departments of social services, health, mental health and mental retardation, and employment and training) have an interagency agreement that provides state leadership and technical assistance to facilitate local interagency coordination focused on dropout prevention.

In 1988, New Jersey launched its School-Based Youth Services Program, designed to provide comprehensive services to youth at school sites. Approximately 30 of these sites are operated by managing agencies designated by the community. They include mental health bodies, local private industry councils, medical schools and hospitals, and community development groups. Each of the school-based centers provides mental health and family counseling, health and substance abuse services, employment counseling and training services, and referral and information services. Many centers also provide child care and family planning and transportation services.

The federal government's role will be more indirect through supporting research and development and reporting pupil outcomes.

These few examples reflect a collaborative thrust that will be burgeoning in the years immediately ahead. They auger a future in which the special needs of children and families will be met by a radically reconfigured education and human service delivery system. School boards have a unique opportunity to be in the vanguard of this inevitable national movement.

National Strategies

The impact of the forces described earlier already has coalesced around national initiatives for reform challenging old concepts of local and state control. These initiatives will take some time to become concrete, but by the mid-1990s they will have a major influence on school boards across the country. Given the slow economic growth in most states, there are currently few resources for state education initiatives. Consequently, we are in a period when nationwide efforts will outpace new state programs. This policymaking shift represents a major contrast to the state leadership thrusts of the 1980s when 44 states passed large-scale education reform packages and education expenditures increased 30 percent in real terms during the decade.

The key concept to consider is the contrast between "nationwide" and "federal government" policies. Almost no one expects a large array of mandated federal policies or a gigantic increase in federal aid (currently it provides only 5 percent of total K–12 education expenditures). The federal government's role will be more indirect through supporting research and development and reporting pupil outcomes.

For example, by the end of the 1990s, the United States will *not* have a detailed national curriculum like the French in the 1930s, but it probably will have nationwide curriculum standards and subject matter frameworks. Currently, nationwide policy is all around us, including the SAT, ACT, regional school accreditation bodies, and such organizations as the Education Commission of the States, the College Board, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). These policy-setting organizations do not represent a specific group of education employees but have the legitimacy to recommend or administer nationwide policies. Unlike many foreign nations, the United States has a long tradition of voluntary, nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations, such as the College Board or the NCAA, which can administer policies across the country. Some, such as those for school accreditation, became prominent before there was a major federal government role in education.

The National Council on Educational Standards and Testing concluded in 1992 that national subject-matter curricular standards meeting world-class benchmarks are needed.

All of the important new influences are compatible and reinforce the six National Education Goals. Many of the political developments creating nationwide policies in the 1990s arise from dismal perceptions of the status of K–12 education, including:

- Current state and local standards for pupil achievement and teacher performance are not high enough, nor do they provide uniform pupil outcome data useful for interstate or local comparisons.
- The commonly used multiple-choice tests are excessively oriented to low-level basic skills that emphasize single right answers. The proclivity of school districts is to choose commercial tests that do *not* adequately emphasize analysis, statistical inference, mathematics problem solving, hands-on science, synthesis, expository writing, and complex reading. Widely used standardized tests, such as the California Test of Basic Skills, Stanford,

or Metropolitan achievement tests are not geared to the high curricular standards of our economic competitors in Europe and Asia. Because we are involved in world-wide economic competition, local control of tests and curriculum is a luxury the United States cannot afford.

- Because the commonly used standardized multiple-choice tests are at such a low level, parents and the general public receive a "phony story" that exaggerates what United States pupils know and can do compared to other nations or prior decades.
- United States tests and examinations often do not contain "high stakes" for the pupils who take them. Few employers look at high school transcripts of high school graduates, and state assessments are not used for college entrance. The SAT is not aligned with the high school curriculum and alleges to measure "aptitude" rather than achievement in subjects like history and science.

These national initiatives should be a part of state systemic reform strategies that revamp staff development and teacher training to make them compatible with the national curricular standards.

A coalition of national leaders (the National Council on Educational Standards and Testing) concluded in 1992 that national subject-matter curricular standards meeting world-class benchmarks are needed. This coalition contends that a nationwide examination system in five core subjects (English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign languages) should be developed and aligned to these world-class standards. Moreover, this coalition believes the examination results should be reported for individual students and used for "high stakes" decisions based largely on student performance. Specifically, employers should use the national examinations when hiring high school graduates, and universities should consider national examination scores as well as high school grades. These national initiatives should be a part of state systemic reform strategies that revamp staff development and teacher training to make them compatible with the national curricular standards. For example, California had most of the elements of systemic reform by the late 1980s. But since then, it has repealed its pupil assessment program and failed to invest adequately in staff development. Consequently, few teachers are able to implement California's curricular frameworks that approach world-class standards.

Special Components of a Future National Strategy

At least seven major groups of political and education leaders represent these national initiatives in education policy. The following list does not include all national groups focusing on education, such as the Business Roundtable and the National Alliance for Business, but the seven discussed illustrate the dramatic escalation of national concern about public school education.

1. *National Education Goals Panel (NEGP).*
   NEGP resulted from the 1989 Presidential Summit and in 1991 included six members from the Bush Administration and six governors. In 1992, NEGP was broadened to include members of Congress and other public members. Congressional members never participated in the National Goals process after the 1989 Charlottesville summit; Congressional Democrats want to broaden the structure and functions of NEGP. The National Governors' Association (NGA) has been very active in elaborating and measuring the national goals as well as in playing a major role in the annual reports on how well the United States is meeting the goals. National standards are implied in education goals 3 and 4.

   - American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
   - United States students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

2. *National Council for Education Standards and Testing (NCEST).*
   NCEST was created by Congress to decide the feasibility and desirability of national standards and assessments. NCEST's 30-member bipartisan board was co-chaired by the same governors leading NEGP—Colorado Democrat Roy Romer and South Carolina Republican Carroll

At least seven major groups of political and education leaders represent these national initiatives in education policy.

Campbell. The NCEST board members are a good example of the emerging coalition pushing national initiatives. NCEST's final report in January 1992 advocated establishing national standards and examinations, with heavy reliance on bottom-up initiatives from professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). Unlike NEGP, the Council had Congressional authorization and participation, expanding the coalition beyond the governors and the Bush Administration. NCEST recommended that it be succeeded by a new entity, the National Education Standards and Assessment Council (NESAC), that would oversee and provide quality assurance of new standards and examinations. NESAC would review proposed examinations submitted by education agencies and private groups to determine if they meet world class curricular standards.

It is quite likely that the general direction of these nationwide efforts will result in new state and local policies by the end of the decade.

3. *New Standards Project (NSP).* NSP is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the MacArthur Foundation, and the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, and is charged with building a national consensus for educational standards in five core subject areas (same as Goal 2). NSP is co-directed by Marc Tucker of the National Center on Education and the Economy and Lauren Resnick of the University of Pittsburgh. NSP has produced some of the country's new understandings of how students learn to think and solve problems. NSP is also working on designing examinations that will be high stakes and be compatible with national standards. The first subject areas developed will be in mathematics and reading.

4. *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).* Since the 1970s, NAEP has conducted periodic national assessments on student achievement in core subject areas. NAEP is funded by the federal government and is overseen by the U.S. Department of Education. The federal contractor is the Educational Testing Service, which supplies the NEGP with subject-matter trends for its reports. NAEP is *not* based on curricular standards or frameworks as envisioned for the high stakes individual pupil examination by NEGP, NCEST, or NSP. NAEP is not

meant to guide classroom syllabi; therefore, its long run future in "world-class high stakes" examinations is uncertain. It will continue in the short run as an overall measure of educational attainment at the national and state level, but will *not* be an examination each pupil takes. NAEP will be used to compare state performance and provide impetus for state curricular reform.

5. *U.S. Labor Department Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS).*
SCANS produced a report outlining the skills necessary for meeting the demands of the workplace. These workplace skills also provide guidance for pupil examinations but are not entirely compatible with the concepts emphasized by NSP or NAEP. For example, SCANS stresses group work, oral communication, and interpersonal skills, but these skills are not featured so far by NAEP or NSP. Groups skills are difficult to combine with individual high stakes examinations.

6. *New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC).*
NASDC is a private nonprofit corporation, initiated by the Bush administration, composed primarily of major businesses. It has recently funded a number of "break-the-mold" school experiments. All grantees must address the world-class standards in the core subject areas specified in NEGP and NCEST. NASDC hopes to provide $200 million in privately funded school experiments between 1992 and 1996; $25 million was committed in 1992 for 11 design teams.

7. *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).*
Based in Detroit, Michigan, NBPTS has a 63-member board (two-thirds teachers) that will begin in 1994 to certify teachers nationally. NBPTS certification assessments, in part, will be based on the ability of teachers to teach the curriculum envisioned by the NSP and NEGP. NBPTS views its certification as appropriate for teachers with three or more years of experience. School boards will be urged to reward teachers who pass NBPTS assessments and provide time for teachers to prepare portfolios and documentation for presentation at a

regional assessment center. NBPTS assessments will be different from any current teacher evaluations and will feature the ability to adapt subject matter to diverse students (e.g., teach fractions to sixth graders in poverty-impacted areas or who have limited English proficiency). NBPTS assessments stress teachers' knowledge of their students and demonstrated ability to work with other teachers to improve local schools. These concepts are quite different from most current local board/ teacher evaluation policies and will likely result in dramatic changes in local teacher salary schedules and evaluation criteria.

The political pressure for national changes is *not* solely top-down, but rather is coming from all directions, including business, professional associations, universities, and school districts.

Implications for School Boards

All of these nationwide efforts may not result in their intended outcomes or be as well integrated as the list above implies. But, it is quite likely that their general direction will result in new state and local policies by the end of the decade. Probably, the "national examination" will *not* be a single examination but rather an examination to which state pupil assessment systems could be anchored. The SCANS orientation may not prove compatible with subject-matter frameworks. Most likely is the impact of NBPTS because it does not require development of the other parts as prerequisites. For example, school boards will have the power to decide whether to recognize and reward NBPTS-certified teachers by 1994.

The developmental costs for these national efforts need not be borne by hard pressed state budgets but can rely on foundations, businesses, and federal appropriations.

The political momentum behind these national efforts is impressive and growing. Opposition has focused on the alleged negative impacts, impracticality and costs of national examinations. States need to monitor developments carefully while keeping in mind that state curricular policy in the 1980s is quite similar to the orientation of these nationwide forces. For example, California's state assessment approach includes individual testing and is very compatible with the high stakes outcomes.

The political pressure for national changes is *not* solely top-down, but rather is coming from all directions, including business, professional associations, universities, and school districts. The parts can interlock, and school boards need to keep the interrelationships in mind rather than merely looking at them one at a time. Political support for these initiatives is bipartisan and broad. The recommendations by NCEST in January 1992 for national standards and examinations was supported by both teacher unions (NEA and AFT), as well as the National School Boards Association. Resistance harking to local control of schools appears to be crumbling, but the technical issues of designing national examinations are formidable and costly.

The biggest political disagreement concerns the federal role for meeting world-class standards and providing equity for all students. The view of most elected Republicans is that the federal role is limited to keeping score on progress toward the national goals and providing research and development. Many elected Democrats contend the federal government should play a major role in funding state and local operations, especially for school readiness, finance equity, and programs for the disadvantaged. After a protracted battle over whether standards should be set for schools/districts as well as students, the 1992 NCEST report said these decisions should be up to states and school districts. Congress, however, may disagree.

It is time for boards to focus on curricular standards, staff development to enable teachers to teach to national standards, new assessment concepts, drastic revisions in teacher evaluation, and strategic plans for reforming entire systems of education.

These emerging nationwide policies will profoundly influence what is on school board agendas in the 1990s. During the past 25 years, school board discussions of finance have been dominated by inputs such as pupil-teacher ratios and disparities in spending among school districts. The movement to national goals' standards and assessments suggests it is time to focus board deliberations on curricular standards, staff development to enable teachers to teach to national standards, new assessment concepts, drastic revisions in teacher evaluation, and strategic plans for reforming entire systems of education. School boards also need to consider how their financial decisions in building budgets and allocating resources are related to these policy issues.

CHAPTER TWO

STRATEGIES: LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES

School boards and education leaders should heed the escalating search for alternatives to current governance and management practices.

Most school boards and local districts have been largely untouched by the enormous outpouring of concern over school reform. Yet, calls for radical change suggest a deep and escalating discontent with the organization and control of public schools as well as their outcomes. School board members and education leaders should take heed of escalating searches for alternatives to the current way we govern and manage schools, as the following examples illustrate.

Alternative Examples

Kentucky's State Reform

In a surprising move of unprecedented magnitude, the Kentucky Supreme Court in 1989 ruled the total system of school governance and finance was in violation of the state constitution's requirement to provide an "efficient system of common schools." Perhaps even more surprisingly, in passing the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, the General Assembly enacted radical legislation that transformed the entire governance structure in the state. Although the implementation of this dramatic legislation is only in its very early stages at this writing, education will never be the same in Kentucky. Many other states are expected to emulate at least some components of Kentucky's plan. In fact, some observers describe the Kentucky reform package as a potential blueprint for change nationally.

The Kentucky legislation is being implemented over a five-year period by officials at the state, local, and building levels. One of the many difficult problems of implementation will be the need to keep citizens informed as the changes are phased in. The expectation is that every child will learn and that the education system will become performance-driven and results-oriented. Student achievement is the centerpiece of the new system, which focuses on outcomes and not inputs.

Kentucky has appropriated substantial new monies to fund its multi-faceted reform initiative. Pre-school programs will be provided for at-risk and other four-year-olds as well as for handicapped children. In addition, a fund is being created to assist districts deemed educationally deficient. The entire state governance structure has been revamped. A new state board, composed of 11 members, is appointed by the governor and confirmed by the General Assembly. The new position of state commissioner of education is appointed, not elected, and the state agency is being reorganized to subscribe to the new philosophy that its role is that of assisting, not regulating, local officials.

The Kentucky legislation reflects the tension between centralization and decentralization that has characterized the reform movement nationally.

Other new state entities were created by the legislation, among them the Technology Council, the Certification Board, and an interagency task force to plan new family resource and youth service centers for school sites in which 20 percent or more of the students are eligible for free meals. The Council on School Performance Standards is establishing learning goals and definitions of expected student learning outcomes. A system of rewards and sanctions predicated on student outcomes will become operational by the 1995–1996 school year. New training and assessment processes for principals and superintendents and new regional service centers for professional staff development are part of the plan.

The components of the legislation that will have the most dramatic impact on school boards, of course, are the provisions delegating great responsibility to teachers, parents, and principals at the school building level. Under the Kentucky legislation, local school councils composed of three teachers, two parents, and the principal are empowered to adopt curriculum, select instructional materials, set policies for discipline and

classroom management, oversee extracurricular activities, and assign students and staff. The local school council can select staff, including the principal, from a list of candidates recommended by the local superintendent of schools. Even the school board's crucial prerogative of selecting the superintendent is constrained by the legislation's mandate that before boards can select their chief executive officers, they must obtain written recommendations from a screening committee composed of two teachers, one principal, one parent, and one board member.

The ramifications for this legislation on the influence of school boards is rather obvious. Kentucky's school boards will have to share many of their traditional prerogatives and decisionmaking powers with the newly created local school councils, as well as with the new state entities created by the Education Reform Act of 1990.

The decentralization provisions passed for Chicago were as radical as any ever promulgated in the history of American education.

School boards still have great authority, however, and can exercise important leadership as the school-site management component and other facets of the new legislation are phased in and fleshed out during the years ahead. Indeed, school boards are currently expected to fill the existing vacuum and are responsible for adopting the policies that will determine how the crucial yet ill-defined school-based management provisions are implemented.

Although many school board members are understandably apprehensive about enactments that so dramatically change their role, the legislation does open up opportunities for them to deal with larger issues such as strategic planning, goal setting, and developing linkages with other agencies.

The Kentucky legislation reflects the tension between centralization and decentralization that has characterized the reform movement nationally. Called a "hodgepodge" by some critics, the Kentucky reforms have both centralizing and decentralizing features. The powers of educational officials at both the state and building levels have been enhanced. At the crucial district level, however, the roles are left open. Despite early problems with the performance of some school boards, Kentucky's plan encourages elected lay school boards to step in and serve as intermediaries between the fledgling building-level councils and the state.

Chicago's Decentralization

If Kentucky symbolizes the most dramatic change at the state level, the restructuring of the Chicago schools represents an equally profound transformation at the school district level. Chicago faced massive difficulties, and the Illinois legislature responded accordingly. Indeed, in the words of one Chicago business leader, the decision was explicitly made to "nuke" the existing school system, including its governing body, the board of education. The influential business community joined other civic and neighborhood leaders in advocating the total transformation of a governance system that had lost all credibility with major segments of Chicago's citizenry.

Many other large districts are being subjected to reform initiatives that may dramatically alter their governance structures.

As in Kentucky, decentralization of the system was the critical element in the comprehensive Chicago governance reforms enacted in 1989 by the Illinois legislature. The decentralization provisions passed for Chicago were as radical as any ever promulgated in the history of American education. The massive, centralized school bureaucracy that had governed Chicago's schools for decades was obliterated, and the new legislation created local councils for each of the city's school buildings. Parents are the majority of members of these building-level councils, with teachers, the principal and community also represented. The local school councils have the authority to develop budgets, determine the curriculum, employ the principal, and set forth school regulations. In a remarkable manifestation of grass-roots democracy in action, approximately 17,000 Chicagoans initially ran for the 6,500 slots on the local school councils. Interest in serving on the councils has diminished somewhat, and the Chicago plan has undergone some legislative changes. Also, some contend the central school board still wields too much power. Nonetheless, Chicago's governance reforms are unprecedented.

Other Experiments

Many other large districts are being subjected to reform initiatives that may dramatically alter their governance structures. In Milwaukee, a voucher plan enables 1,000 economically disadvantaged city youngsters, if they so desire, to attend private, nonsectarian schools. The state of Wisconsin pays up to $2,500 of each child's tuition costs. This controversial plan is designed

to provide choice to Black youngsters who are allegedly trapped in Milwaukee's inferior inner-city schools.

In Detroit, a reconstituted elected school board has been advocating a plan that would combine elements of both Milwaukee's choice scheme and Chicago's thrust toward individual school community control of public education. The nation's two largest school systems, New York City and Los Angeles, are both engaged in testing the feasibility of school-site management.

The Chelsea, Massachusetts, experiment is perhaps the most controversial of all the recent initiatives. The school system in this small, troubled city, strongly condemned for years, arranged a radical new partnership in 1989 with Boston University. In essence, the city of Chelsea transferred control of its school system over to a private institution of higher education. Boston University assumed full operating authority for the city's schools and pledged to improve the achievement of students within 10 years through a comprehensive set of changes and reforms which included early childhood education starting at age three, more extensive parental involvement in the educational process, an extended school year, after-school programs to assist working parents, and a wide range of social services to support students.

State governments, in the last few years, have been pushing for basic governance changes that might have been unthinkable only a short time ago.

State governments in the last few years, as we have discussed, have likewise been pushing for basic governance changes that might have been unthinkable only a short time ago. The movement toward choice is expanding in many different states throughout the nation. Choice initiatives, which have increased so dramatically at the local district level, are now being sanctioned by state governments in Arkansas, Minnesota, and Iowa, with similar legislation pending in numerous other jurisdictions.

State takeovers of deficient school systems are another example of recent dramatic state initiatives. New Jersey's takeover of the Jersey City and Paterson schools is especially noteworthy. Under the provisions of the Quality Education Act of 1990, state officials in New Jersey were given unprecedented powers to dictate how local school systems allocate their resources. Under that law, 30 urban school districts were to share in almost $1 billion of additional state aid. The New Jer-

sey commissioner was empowered to compel 30 "needy" districts to gain state approval before approving budgets allocating the new financial resources.

Finally, a fascinating experiment is being launched in Dade County, Florida, which has enjoyed a national reputation as a pioneering school district in school-site management and shared decisionmaking. The Dade County schools contracted with a private, for-profit company to develop the educational program for a new elementary school. The Minneapolis-based firm, Education Alternatives Inc., trained the new school's teachers and principal to implement a program that stresses individual instruction, the use of computers, an emphasis on reading and literature, low student-teacher ratios, differentiated staffing, hands-on instruction, nongraded classes, and a professional teaching environment. Baltimore has also recently contracted with Education Alternatives to run nine schools.

What happened in only a few places in 1989 might well take place in many other educational jurisdictions in the years immediately ahead, particularly if more substantive changes do not occur under the aegis of the existing governance structure.

The charter schools concept, approved experimentally by Minnesota in 1991, goes a step further than simple parental choice of a public school. It assumes that true choice may require entirely new schools. Any qualified institution or group—a college or university, a social service organization or team of teachers—may seek to set up a charter school. But the charter application must be sponsored officially by a responsible public body (government or school board). The charter schools must be open to all; they must be tuition free, nonsectarian, nonselective, and nondiscriminatory. For each student they can attract, they receive from government the average per pupil amount currently provided by the state and/or locality. Colorado passed legislation in 1992 which allows a school to "secede" from a school district, with state approval, and become an independent school in a new state at-large district. This is a similar reform to an element in the United Kingdom's recent education reforms.

Proposed Experimental Modes

- *Use competitive contracting of school management.* A more expansive version of the contracting model has been proposed by Philip Schlechty, president of the Center for Leadership and School Reform in Louisville,

Kentucky. Under his plan, each state would set up a public education commission responsible for ensuring that the voters in every county, city, or town may choose who would provide schooling in their community. Potential providers could obtain state charters by promising to provide equal access, transportation, racial balance, performance data, and collective bargaining rights. The choice of provider would be made through local elections for a term as long as 10 years. The local school administration could appear on the ballot as could teachers, either independently or through their union. Schlechty argues competition on this scale is vital to move bureaucracies toward change.

- *Merge school boards with children's policy boards.* A locality might decide to merge its local education board with a children's policy board to provide a superior continuum of services for children and fewer instances of children "falling between the cracks" of the different social services providers. One of the grants awarded by the New American Schools Development Corporation will support development of such a governance reform in DuPage County, Illinois.

School board members and other educational leaders who do not seize the initiative might find their roles and influence dramatically diminished in the years ahead.

- *Merge education into general purpose government.* This option would make school districts a department of city government reporting to the mayor and city council. The school board would become a city-wide citizens' education advisory committee focused on policy.

While "radical" in one respect, all of these options would remain under the umbrella of public education. This sets them apart from so-called voucher plans under which public funds could also flow to schools that are either sectarian or charge tuition, or both.

These examples admittedly are not typical of the current educational governance situation. In fact, they represent extreme deviations from the norm. Most school boards and their administrative staffs now operate as they have for many years. But we contend that such radical rearrangement of the public schools may become more common in the 1990s. School officials who still believe that the *status quo* can be sustained are making, in our estimation, a major tactical and substantive

error. The radical reforms discussed in Kentucky and Chicago, for example, were all enacted with surprising rapidity in 1989. This is hardly a coincidence and reflects the willingness of influential lay reformers to change the system dramatically.

Our point here is to stress to board members and other educational leaders that what happened in only a few places in 1989 might well take place in many other educational jurisdictions in the years immediately ahead, particularly if more substantive changes do not occur under the aegis of the existing governance structure. The handful of examples of dramatic changes which have been considered or occurred so quickly and unexpectedly conveys a critically important message—that the nation's most influential political and business leaders have begun to lose patience with the prevailing glacial pace of change in the education enterprise.

School board members and other educational leaders who do not seize the initiative might find their roles and influence dramatically diminished in the years ahead.

CHAPTER THREE

STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS: A ZERO-SUM GAME?

School boards are just one of many actors and institutions in a complex political web that controls American education. In fact, school boards have been the biggest loser in the power shifts of the past 30 years. Nonetheless, the American public, which lost trust in both professional educators and state and federal governments during those years, came to expect school boards to play a leadership role.

State involvement in local schools has expanded both in programs and personnel.

State involvement in local schools has expanded both in programs and personnel. Over time, several important decisions have come to be made at the state level. Most states *define the program scope,* such as kindergarten, vocational education, or junior college. The legislature usually delegates to the state board of education the prerogative to *set minimum standards* for curriculum, pupil promotion and graduation, and even instructional materials. Some state boards *adopt a standard course of study* or detailed guidelines for subject areas such as civics or math. Southern states in particular *adopt textbooks* that are distributed to all public schools. State regulations and statutes are even more detailed with respect to requirements for *certification of teachers.* Most states stipulate the length of the training program, define some specifics on its content, and accredit training institutions. The most visible state political issue has been financial support for education. Some states set tax limits for local districts and require certain local budget breakdowns.

This state role arises from another consideration, the pull of localism. The evolution of state influence on and financial support for local schools has been replete with philosophical

and practical political struggles between state and local jurisdictions. The constitutional power of state government has been in constant tension with a widely held value that the soundest educational policy is determined locally.

Recently, school boards have been bypassed altogether through state regulation and performance reporting. The focus of state education policy in the 1970s was primarily on programs earmarked for handicapped, disadvantaged, or other special-needs pupils. But in the 1980s, state education policy shifted to mandating educational practices in those localities where school boards do not appear to have been sufficiently vigilant in dealing with what is taught, how it should be taught, who should teach it, and how results should be measured.

In the 1980s, state education policy began to mandate educational practices in those localities where school boards did not appear sufficiently vigilant in dealing with what was taught, how it should be taught, who should teach it, and how to measure the results.

Increased state control is just one example of how local school boards are no longer the preeminent educational governance institution. Another example is the fact that teacher preparation and pre-school programs do not fall under school board supervision. In addition, the impact of collective bargaining has reduced school boards' discretionary powers in many jurisdictions.

School boards provide a critical local perspective to policymaking. In a country committed to representative democracy, school boards provide citizen access that remote state and federal capitals cannot duplicate. At the same time, there is evidence that the public wants much more nonlocal intervention when it comes to educational standards, accountability, programs for special-needs pupils, and many other areas. For example, between 1983 and 1990, 40 states increased or modified the state testing systems that influence local educational standards.

The Impact of State Reform on Local School Policy

The expansion and shift in state education strategies in the 1980s *did not* include, generally, a rethinking of the local school board's role, nor did it envision the board as a leader for implementing change. There were exceptions, of course, but in the main, the school board's role remained static in the 1983–1990 reform period. Indeed, a main plank of state restructuring was school-based management that seemed to circumvent the

school board. However, a review of the impact of intensified state activity shows that although school boards were not initiators of change, they were quick to implement state policies that could be easily accommodated.

The Center for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) prepared an overview of state reforms based on intensive cases in six states and a synthesis of national literature.[1] CPRE came to the following six conclusions:

1. States have concentrated primarily on mandating more academic courses and on upgrading teaching through changes in certification and compensation. They have made substantial efforts to give students more academic content. Forty-five of the states specified, or increased, for the first time, their graduation requirements. Student testing requirements have also increased.

2. In spite of the national press for reform, states' political cultures affected the passing of legislation, the kind of reforms adopted, and the way reforms were implemented. Three states in the CPRE study with histories of solving problems with large-scale policy fixes used that approach again. California's 1983 reform legislation is in the same tradition of reform as its 1972 early childhood and school finance legislation and its 1979 school improvement act. Similarly, Florida has a history of major reforms that was repeated in 1983. By the same token, states without experience in comprehensive reform did not initiate it in the 1980s. Pennsylvania's reforms were organized by the governor, which, as in the past, largely grew out of state board action. Arizona's history contains only modest legislative reforms.

3. States tended to reject complicated reform recommendations in favor of more manageable ones. State policies are difficult to implement when they are: expensive; a large quantitative addition to what already exists; complex, requiring new administrative arrangements, new technologies or inventions, or new behavior from teachers and administrators; and/or redistributive, moving money, status, or authority from those who have it to those who do not.

Although school boards were not initiators of change, they were quick to implement state policies that could be easily accommodated.

4. Most state reforms were not coherent packages. Reforms with mutually reinforcing parts have the greatest impact. Each part facilitates the other, and the entire package sends a coordinated message to local educators. As a rule the recent round of reforms lacked such coherence. The most common problem was not that specific provisions conflicted, but that they were often unrelated, sending a barrage of signals to districts. School boards were then forced to make complicated decisions about the allocation of time and money.

5. States are exhibiting no clear shift in direction from the first wave of reform to the second. Educational rhetoric portrays two waves of reform. The first took place from approximately 1982 to 1986 and concentrated on establishing minimum competency standards for students and teachers. About 1986, states discussed moving beyond the setting of standards to improve the conditions and quality of teaching, but very little state legislation was enacted. Teachers as the focus of state reform did not have much political appeal and teacher organizations could not coalesce behind any specific agenda.

6. The easiest-to-implement reforms have stayed in place. For the most part, those adopted in the 1983-1986 period of extensive legislative and executive activity have become part of the educational infrastructure. Few have been rescinded. One big exception in the states studied by CPRE is Florida's master-teacher program, which was repealed.

CPRE also examined the response of local education authorities to these state reforms. It found that local boards were willing to implement "intensification" mandates. CPRE concluded that:

1. Local boards exhibited very little resistance to reforms involving increased academic content. In fact, in some cases, district requirements exceeded those of the state. Many districts actually welcomed the changes. First, in many cases, the reforms legitimized existing local practices. That is, in several states district requirements already met or exceeded those newly enacted by the state. Second, the reforms were not difficult to implement. Teachers and administrators knew what had to be

done to add new courses to the curriculum. And, finally, the proposed changes often had widespread support. District leaders saw the reforms as an opportunity to do something constructive. Parents and community members also supported the changes. These reforms differ from the more unpopular reforms of the 1960s, which involved politically unpopular redistributive changes from wealthier districts to poor ones.

2. Much of the progress on the restructuring agenda resulted from district initiatives. A few states, such as Washington, Arkansas, Maine, and Massachusetts, have initiated programs to encourage school restructuring. However, state involvement in the restructuring movement has usually taken the form of seed money for local experimentation.

3. Some districts are actively using state policies to promote local priorities. Past research on the implementation of reforms has shown that state policies typically result in mutual accommodation between those at the state and local levels. CPRE researchers found this pattern—sometimes referred to as "see you and raise you five"—where districts exceeded state requirements in ways that met their own objectives.

In view of these findings, school boards *cannot* be portrayed as resistant to past state initiatives or as part of the implementation problem. But this local acceptance of state reforms has not led to more state confidence in local school boards. They still are not considered initiators of restructuring which changes the culture and standard operating procedures of school systems. In many places, the invitation is there for school boards to establish a climate of change and orchestrate various components into a coherent strategy. Few have accepted it.

School boards *cannot* be portrayed as resistant to past state initiatives or as part of the implementation problem, however, this local acceptance of state reforms has not led to more state confidence in local school boards.

Recent Shifts in the Potential Influence of Boards

IEL's 1986 study of school boards illuminated the complex web of education governance, particularly the growing influence of individuals and groups external to the local school board and central office. The pattern is for state authorities (legislators, governors, and chief state school officers) to increase their influence over funding and policy from the top. Simultaneously,

employee unions, parents, interest groups, and private agencies (testing and accrediting) have squeezed the discretionary zone of school board control from the bottom. Local central school authorities are sandwiched in by these contending forces. Clearly the zone of policy discretion at the school district level has grown smaller over the past 30 years.[2]

But the changing governance picture is more complex than a zero-sum model where one level expands its influence (e.g., state) at the expense of the lower (local) level.[3] Many California state policies, for example, leave considerable room for flexibility and enhance local initiative. The concept then, is mutual influence among education policy levels, not zero-sum. Some state mandates, e.g., requiring a semester of economics, are strongly directive of local behavior. But mandates and rules have not been the main strategy for states to guide or influence local curricular content. California curricular frameworks in science and social studies, for example, are not mandates and provide a framework rather than prescribe a detailed list of content to be taught. Moreover, many local districts use the state curricular framework as a springboard for their solution to a particular local context. The CPRE study stresses that much state policy is characterized by low enforcement, imprecise policy directives, and local initiative. Many local districts in an earlier PACE study not only complied with California's 1983 reform law (SB 813) but also were building on the state-based mandates to add new policies of their own.[4] In their study of six states (including California), CPRE researchers found that:

Clearly the zone of policy discretion at the school district level has grown smaller over the past 30 years.

> *Local activism in reform has been noted in several studies of the reform movement . . . . This local activism takes a variety of forms: staying ahead of the state and of peers by enacting policies in anticipation of higher state policies to meet specific needs, and using state policies as a catalyst for achieving district objectives. The clearest current manifestation of local activism is the curriculum alignment and standardization movement underway in many districts.*[5]

These newer studies of the impact of state reforms indicate that both state and local control can increase as a result of state policymaking.

Moreover, there is one crucial and unique role for school boards in education reform. Just as their leadership counterparts at the state level, school boards must make sense of a multitude of programs and efforts. At the local level, the school board is the only entity which can ensure that various components of restructuring are linked coherently and do not become merely disjointed projects. To do this, the school board's consistent message to the entire school system must be that restructuring is its mission and not just an experiment.

A major failing of restructuring approaches to date is that only a few of the necessary components are addressed, and they are rarely linked to curricular and instructional outcomes (what students should know and be able to do). For example, in some local districts, restructuring merely introduces school-based management or organizational changes without establishing a clear relationship to the district's instructional program. For example, a school board's goal may include more complex concepts, but its accountability system may continue to emphasize tests of low-level skills.

A major failing of restructuring approaches to date is that only a few of the necessary components are addressed, and they are rarely linked to curricular and instructional outcomes.

The board should be in charge of overall strategy and oversight, with its policies linking the central instructional goals with other major areas for restructuring, such as school-site decentralization, new professional roles, and accountability. Moreover, the board needs to take the lead in establishing more integrated children's services—a crucial component of the restructuring strategy. Without formal approval and incentives from the top of the school organization, it is unlikely that the front-line school professionals will collaborate with social workers, health providers, and others.

Policy coherence also implies that the school board needs to analyze its array of policies for major gaps, conflicts, and degree of implementation issues. For instance, if the board wants to install a new science program, a number of policies would have to be changed in a coherent fashion. First, student science outcomes must be defined so as to embody new concepts. Curricular frameworks, tests, texts, and teacher in-service training must then reflect the new concepts. Moreover, categorical programs, e.g., compensatory education, and additional staff would need to be congruent with the revamped science focus.

Centralization and Decentralization: Divergent Trends

Two separate and divergent trends in school governance are emerging—nationwide curricular influences and devolution of decisions to the school site. These trends have important implications for the local school board. The national goals formulated by President Bush and the National Governors' Association are being reinforced by interstate assessment comparisons utilizing NAEP, development of higher standards for all academic subjects, and development of a national assessment system that matches the standards.

An offsetting trend to this centralization is that of increasing the operational authority of individual schools. This is consistent with modern private sector and organizational development dogma and poses profound challenges to school boards.[6]

Two separate and divergent trends in school governance are emerging—nationwide curricular influences and devolution of decisions to the school site.

The operational details of school-site devolution vary a great deal.[7] In some models, the only ceding of central office discretion is over trivial matters such as the spending of budgeted funds for instructional supplies. This typically amounts to only a small proportion of overall school money, even when per pupil allocations are aggregated for all students in a large secondary school. At the opposite extreme are models where teachers, as a collective, make decisions regarding employment and retention of new staff, allocate budgets, determine discipline policy, and control the daily school schedule. In between are variations where the authority is allocated to principals or heads but not to teachers, or hiring discretion is allocated to a school but selection can take place only from a pool of recruits compiled by central, district-wide authorities.

School-site discretion appears at first glance to be paradoxical. In the face of growing state centralization of school decisionmaking, why would greater operating authority be ceded to school sites? The frequent justification is that, whereas it is necessary for central authorities to specify the *what* of schooling, it is not appropriate, or even sensible, for them to specify the *how*.

Another common rationale for decentralization is that teachers are, or at least should be, "professionals." State specification of their instructional behavior is therefore seen as de-

meaning. Presumably they know what their students need and are trained to meet those needs. Another rationale is that too little is known about instruction to take the risk of specifying teaching behavior centrally. Under conditions of technical uncertainty, better to permit a "thousand flowers to bloom."

The school board is a crucial player in efforts to reform American education. Its role in the 1983–1988 state reforms was responsive, but these reforms mostly intensified the existing system rather than restructured it. Restructuring requires bold, risk-taking school board leadership and coherent local policymaking—rare among school boards to date. State initiatives do not necessarily lead to a commensurate loss in local control. There is room for school boards to capitalize on state reforms to expand their own influence and leadership—if they undertake aggressive policymaking and leadership for education reform within their communities.

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CHAPTER FOUR

GOVERNANCE: LESSONS FROM OTHER NATIONS

In a global economy—now a fact, not a possibility—the implications of what states and localities do to improve education expand beyond their boundaries. The new international context fuels the drive for major improvement in the education of America's children and youth and accounts, in large measure, for the growing involvement of the corporate and political communities.

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But, also, the education governance structures in other industrialized democracies can provide some broader context for American dialogue about governance. We chose three nations for examination of their governance structures: Canada, Great Britain and Japan. Neither Germany nor France are included because their highly authoritarian governance structures are antithetical to basic American education governance tenets. Our discussion is limited to the issue of governance and does not purport to evaluate the educational systems in the three countries or to provide a comprehensive analysis of them.

Canada

The United States considers its system of local public education governance as unique but this is not really true unless we include our neighbors to the north as participants in this "unique American institution." Canadian public education is governed by local boards to which the provincial ministries of education and provincial legislatures have delegated basic responsibilities. These include: establishment and maintenance of schools, hiring of teachers and negotiating their salaries,

purchase of supplies and equipment, provision of school transportation, and preparation of budgets. Within provincial guidelines, local boards have considerable latitude in shaping school curricula. In most provinces, boards are authorized to levy taxes and manage grants. In other words, if one substitutes state for province, the governance structure is basically like ours and frequently exhibits analogous tensions between the roles of the provinces and local districts as we see between states and local districts in this country.

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The governance structure dates from 1867 when four provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario) united. Responsibility for education was given to the legislatures of each province. As new territories achieved provincial status, they were made responsible for their own systems of education. The basic structure grew, as it did in the United States, from the structure in the original states/provinces. When Canada was more rural than urban, the provincial departments of education exercised central control over much of public education. Since the middle of this century, the trend has been toward decentralization, with some provinces continuing to exercise greater central control than others. As urbanization increased and larger school districts were organized, local authorities with sizeable school systems were permitted to appoint their own city or municipal "inspectors" or district superintendents. Thus, the professionalization of the district superintendent and increasing need for higher professional qualifications in some ways parallels the professionalization of educational administration in the United States.[1]

The most notable difference is that some provinces with heavily French-speaking populations maintain dual structures of French and English language schools, but they all are within the public system and have a common governance structure. Another major difference is at the federal level. There is no defined federal role in public elementary and secondary education in Canada and no federal ministry for education. The federal government does become involved indirectly through its role with immigrants, development of official minority and second-language programs, research grants and some federal financing streams which find their way to elementary and secondary education.

Canada prides itself on being a country which believes in diversity and maintaining diversity through governmental policies. The "melting pot" philosophy which formed much of our public policy and objectives for our nation's public schools was never espoused in Canada. The very strong history of two cultures, French and English, living side by side (not always easily) has shaped the public institutions, including schooling. Canada is beginning to struggle with the implications of maintaining diversity as it copes with immigration of great numbers of peoples from many different cultures and with the country's national interests in the global economy. It is possible to detect some undercurrents of concern about what it means to be Canadian, how to answer this short of becoming a "melting pot," and what the role of education is in terms of the national interest.

Canada prides itself on being a country which believes in diversity and maintaining diversity through governmental policies.

Roots of conflict in Canada between the provincial and district governance levels parallel, in many ways, the conflicts in this country. The central provincial ministries are frequently more progressive and view education as strategic to the general well-being of the population. Local boards are frequently viewed as conservative and much more concerned with property taxes and maintaining the political and educational *status quo*. The issue of control is a consistent theme. The ministries of education must deal with local boards which have their own definitions of compliance with provincial policies and regulations. The tensions are familiar.

Great Britain

The education system in Great Britain has historically been one of the least centralized in Europe. Given the historic roots in Great Britain of institutions and political philosophy in the United States and much of Canada, the generic structural similarities are not surprising. Great Britain's system is in marked contrast to France where, as the saying goes, "one knows what every student is doing at 10 a.m. on any given school day"; and to Germany where the education system is rigorously selective by dint of public policy. While the British have historically had a dual system reinforcing the British class structure, i.e., the "public schools" (private) for the upper class and government-sponsored public education for other classes, primary and secondary education for the majority of the British has been de-

cidedly "local" in governance and operation. Great Britain first had a "non-system" of schools operated by private and voluntary organizations, then Parliament in 1870 established public education through local school boards. Governance of education by County Borough Councils was established in 1900, and at the same time Parliament established the national Board of Education. Post-World War II acts of Parliament continued local control through a system of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with School Councils. Recognition of the national importance of education was reflected in changing the Board of Education to a Ministry of Education in 1944 and, now, a Department of Education and Science headed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

While the British have historically had a dual system reinforcing the British class structure, primary and secondary education for the majority of the British has been decidedly "local" in governance and operation.

Individual schools have had great autonomy in curriculum, rules for students and organization of the school. Teachers have had a strong role, with the head teacher, in shaping each school while incorporating consultation with parents. Thus, there is wide diversity within each LEA and parents may select their children's schools within their LEA. Each school has a Board of Governors whose membership until the 1988 Education Reform Act consisted of members of the local community nominated by the LEA, together with representatives of parents and teachers. Financing of schools prior to the 1988 Act was basically provided by an LEA acting much as a local school district in the United States. Parental choice existed prior to 1988, but LEAs had power to manipulate school quotas or zoning systems to insure balanced enrollments in both popular and unpopular schools.

The 1988 Education Reform Act addressed three major themes in education reform with which the United States is struggling—school autonomy, using marketplace forces in education reform, and the national interest in the quality and outcomes of pre-collegiate education. At the same time, Great Britain greatly diminished the professional autonomy teachers had enjoyed in the governance and operation of individual schools. Great Britain's move from the autonomy which teachers exercised to school governance more broadly inclusive of other community interests may offer a lesson to those who perceive the salvation of public education in this country to be professional autonomy in the schools.

Through the 1988 Act, Great Britain removed much of the governance of schools from the LEAs and vested it in individual schools. At the same time, Parliament changed the governance of local schools from school councils to boards of governors with reduced representation of the LEAs, increased parental and local community representation determined by the other governors with a mandate to include people from business. Further, open enrollment was established which deprives the LEAs of most of their former power to balance student numbers among schools. The LEAs' power is further diminished through the ability of schools to leave an LEA and become independent, although they may not charge fees to students. Schools are financed according to their enrollments. The head teacher in each school is responsible for managing the budget while responsible to a school's board of governors. Great Britain side-stepped the issue of public support of private schools by disallowing students to take their funding to nonpublic schools. Disadvantaged children bring more money with them when they enroll in a school.[2]

In the opinion of some in Britain, the move to national rather than local district control will actually diminish the politicization of education, and local control will be redefined in terms of individual schools rather than broader governmental jurisdictions.

At the same time as Great Britain devolved much greater governance to the local school site, control of curriculum and educational accountability was greatly increased at the national level. The first step has been the institution of national tests which are now given to 7- and 11-year-olds, in addition to 16-year-olds.

The changes in governance have been decried as usurping the governing authority of the school district and carrying the seeds of tyranny in an established national curriculum, or in our terms, destroying local control. The professional resistance to national tests appears to have disappeared. It is much too early to know how prescriptive a national curriculum will be and to judge whether the LEAs will wither away if many individual schools choose to become independent. In the opinion of some, the move to national rather than local district control will actually diminish the politicization of education, and local control will be redefined in terms of individual schools rather than broader governmental jurisdictions.

Japan

Japan is included as an example of an industrialized nation with roots outside English political institutions and for other obvious reasons: the achievement of Japanese school children and the country's economic competitiveness with the United States. Unlike this nation, Canada, or Great Britain, Japan has a homogeneous population and a tradition of societal controls on the individual. While Japan is a constitutional democracy (imposed during the American occupation following World War II), population homogeneity and culture have determined the development of democratic institutions and are key variables in the structure of and results of Japanese public education.

The American decentralized governance structure was grafted onto Japanese educational tradition but did not change the core of that tradition which is congruent with Japanese social and cultural norms.

Japan has nine years of compulsory schooling (ages 6–15) with two types of public institutions categorized by funding sources: National, which are funded by the central Japanese government; and Public, which are funded by prefectures and municipalities. Japan lodges national responsibility for education in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. It is responsible for the integrated administration of education at the national level related to the promotion and dissemination of education at all levels, science and cultural activities, supervision of different educational establishments and the supervision/advice and financial assistance to local education authorities. The Ministry is responsible for national accountability for education through reports of educational activities at the local level and has the power to hold inquiries and order improvements or corrections by local education authorities.

At the sub-national level, Japanese elementary and secondary education has a two-tier governance structure exercised by the 47 prefectures and municipalities within them. Each prefecture has a five-member board of education appointed by the elected governor with the consent of the prefectural assembly. These board members have four-year terms of office. The prefectural superintendent of education is responsible to and appointed by the board of education with approval from the central government's Minister of Education. Prefectures operate schools and provide financial assistance to and supervision of the municipal school districts.

Each municipality has a board of education of 3–5 members appointed by the mayor with consent from the municipal assembly. Each board is empowered to select a municipal superintendent *from among the board members.* Each municipal board administers municipal education establishments, appoints and dismisses teachers in the municipal schools, organizes curricula for the schools and selects textbooks from the national Ministry's list of approved texts.

The central Ministry retains responsibility for curriculum as well as choice of textbooks throughout the public system. The major control lodged in the central Ministry reflects the roots of Japan's introduction of an educational system in 1872 which was modeled after the French practice of highly centralized education and a high degree of standardization.[3] The American decentralized governance structure was grafted onto Japanese educational tradition but did not change the core of that tradition which is congruent with Japanese social and cultural norms.

Whether the governance system is a key variable in the success of the Japanese peer collegiate system has not been demonstrated. The homogeneity of Japanese culture and the societal expectations of individuals must also be considered.

The educational success of the Japanese pre-collegiate system as reflected in student academic achievement is undeniable. However, how much the governance system, i.e., a strong central government role and sub-national governance appointed by units of general government, is a key variable in the success of the Japanese peer collegiate system has not been demonstrated. Homogeneity and Japanese culture and societal expectations of individuals also must be considered. And, there are short-comings in Japanese education, including the reliance on factual learning versus analytical and problem-solving learning, the extreme pressures on young adolescents prior to the infamous sorting of students for post-secondary education, and the bureaucratic control of education which resists change.

Are These Governance Lessons Relevant to the United States?

The answer, not surprisingly, is both yes and no. The United States' and Canada's local governance structures are different only in detail. In some of the provinces, the provincial ministry of education exercises greater authority than our states with greater ease—there are, on average, far fewer local school dis-

tricts in the provinces. This has resulted in a relatively simpler structure for the provinces to oversee. However, the provinces struggle with provincial-wide reform and the effect of local boards in carrying out the will of the provinces. The local boards talk about the same issues as boards in the United States in relation to provincial/state control and diminution of local decisionmaking. And, Canada because of its particular federal structure, has no central governance role, even to the limited extent of the federal government in the United States. There is little of relevance to restructuring education governance in the United States except, perhaps, what might be learned from how local governance operates under much stronger roles for provincial education authorities.

As Winston Churchill observed, democracy is messy but it is much "messier" in the United States with its federal structure, vast expanses and 15,000 plus school districts and their governing boards.

The Japanese structure relates education governance much more directly to units of general government, with these bodies, whether prefectural or municipal, appointing the boards of education. The drive to analyze and possibly restructure the governance of education in the United States is driven by the need to improve educational attainment, and we tend to look to the Japanese for answers. It is far more probable that the number of days Japanese students spend in school per year, the length of the school day and school week, the safe assumption that the schools are demanding no more than parents and the larger society are of students, and the integration of all societal sectors through a common and individually controlling culture are the key variables rather than the governance structure.

Great Britain, however, provides some lessons in restructuring the governance of education which are directly relevant to issues with which this country is grappling. And, not surprisingly given our historic roots, governance reforms in England are, for the most part, consistent with the historical political heritage of the United States. Further, the 1988 British educational reforms grew out of very similar national concerns—raising the educational attainment of all students, an increasingly diverse population (particularly in the urban areas), a growing national interest in public education related to economic survival, and the resistance of the existing structure to change. Great Britain has taken very bold steps, at one time, to change the structure for financing schools from institutional to student, to increase all sectors' involvement in schooling at the school site level, to put pressure on the school district (the

LEAs in Great Britain) by allowing public schools to exist independently of the district, and to assure the national interest is met through the development of a national curriculum and national accountability through national tests.

Great Britain's reform allowing individual schools to opt out of their LEAs is very similar to that promoted by choice advocates John Chubb and Terry Moe, who posit that only through schools independent of local bureaucracies can real restructured schooling develop.[4] The British optional structure is also similar to Minnesota's enabling legislation for charter schools and the recent Colorado legislation allowing individual schools to break away from their school districts and become part of an at-large statewide school district. Both the British structure and the American examples lodge governance in a school governing body with parents and teachers exerting major control of the schools. Political confrontations in Great Britain have arisen between the governors of schools and the professional leaders of schools, with the national ministry caught between the parties in what are frequently struggles with racial/ethnic roots.

Governance structures are consistent with national values and consensus about the purposes of education, and reflect the social and political expectations for different national societies.

But, even if we agree that Great Britain "figured it out," there is one very major difference between the two countries: Great Britain can accomplish national restructuring of education and its governance by an act of Parliament. As Winston Churchill observed, democracy is messy but it is much "messier" in the United States with its federal structure, vast expanses and 15,000 plus school districts and their governing boards.

Looking to other industrialized democracies for lessons about governance out of context of their societies and their purposes for public education is an irrelevant exercise. The public education system of the United States (including higher education) is the most egalitarian system in the world. Data demonstrate that many more American youth still complete secondary school than do their peers in other countries although the gap is being narrowed. By the mid-1980s, 75 percent of students in the United States completed high school versus 15–30 percent in Europe, Great Britain and Canada. One reason for the startling difference is that many of these countries "sort" their adolescents at ages 14 or 15, diverting many into vocational and technical programs. The issue for purposes of

this discussion is not whether this sorting results in a better preparation of youth for entry into the world of work in late adolescence, but whether other countries' systems of governance are more effective.

Governance structures are consistent with national values and consensus about the purposes of education, and reflect the social and political expectations for different national societies. The United States has had a primary purpose for public education different from other industrialized democracies. We have looked to our public schools to impart our political and social values and to create a nation from immigrants. The schools have been the instrument for the "melting pot." We have also looked to our schools to be, as Horace Mann said, "the balance wheel of society" through which social inequalities would be moderated and all would have an opportunity to rise.

The United States has had a primary purpose for public education different from other industrialized democracies. The schools have been the instrument for the "melting pot."

The goal of excellence creeps into dialogue about public schools only when we perceive an external threat, e.g., the reforms in science, math and foreign languages education after Sputnik and the current concerns about global economic competitiveness. Since the mid-1960s, this nation has been consumed with issues of equality of access to what is, much more than we have been consumed with the quality of "what is." At the same time, the educational achievement of students in the cities has been in a precipitous free fall. But, we invest our resources and elect local school boards consistent with our political values and our dominant political goals—equality of access and integration of our population.

Only in a relatively few school districts across the country have excellence and an unspoken goal, preparation of an "elite," dominated community dialogue and expectations of the behavior of school boards. These are the school districts of the well-educated and politically involved upper middle class.

Many school board members in urban and poor rural districts know that the majority of their high school students are not going on to college right out of high school, or ever. However, any school board that might put this issue and its implications for the organization and content of the high school program squarely on the table would be viewed as undermining the possibility of all students having all options as long as possible. And, that is a national value.

CHAPTER FIVE

REPORT CARD ON SCHOOL BOARDS

Is it simply the school boards' turn for scrutiny as the nation seeks to solve the problems of the public schools? Or, is governance a key variable to achieving the objectives of education reform, one that can affect all reform efforts?

In the first wave of education reform, both local governance and the structure of schooling received little attention. This inattention to governance issues could be construed to reflect a lack of confidence in school boards.

As we have emphasized, in the first wave of education reform, both local governance and the structure of schooling received little attention. State reform efforts simply mandated more of the same and continued to exercise greater control of local school districts. This inattention to governance issues could be construed to reflect a lack of confidence in school boards. Indeed, the initiatives of legislators and many governors seemed to imply that local governance and professional leadership had failed. State policymakers felt they needed to take charge of what and how much students needed to learn and of how states would know if students were learning.

The school board community reacted in different ways, from concern about not being partners in the reforms to anger at the attacks on "local control." However, school boards generally responded well to the first wave of education reform, primarily because it basically only required boards to do more of what they were doing within the same structure of schooling.

A key characteristic of the first wave of education reform was its lack of specific strategies for improving educational outcomes among the nation's growing number of students from populations historically poorly served by schools.

By the late 1980s, scant evidence existed of improved student achievement in urban school districts, and little across

the nation.[1] More of the same obviously was not accomplishing the reform objectives. Increasingly, the first wave of state reforms were seen as an inadequate response to the complex problems confronting the majority of students in the cities (4 percent of the nation's school districts enroll more than 40 percent of the nation's students), as well as in demographically changing inner-ring suburbs and poor rural areas. Thus was born the second wave of education reform, focused on student outcomes. It carried within it the seeds for what have sprouted into serious attacks upon local school leadership.

The second wave of education reform focused on student outcomes and carried within it the seeds for serious attacks upon local school leadership.

The second wave of reform questions everything about the existing system and demands restructuring of public education. Strong leadership for and commitment to systemic change on the part of school boards is critical to the success of reforms requiring basic organizational change, devolution of or at least broadened participation in education decisions, a shift from accountability for educational inputs to outputs (i.e., student achievement), higher-order curricula with an emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving, linkages to agencies providing human and social services, systemic solutions to the problem of transition into the world of work, and greater access to quality education. The new reforms create challenging internal and external political changes for school boards and the district bureaucracies they govern. These reforms require both new definitions of the role and responsibilities of school boards and very different behaviors.

The school board community, as articulated by its national association, recently has formulated a guiding statement concerning the governance role and primary responsibilities of school boards. The statement is intended to have an impact on boards and to infuse all school board development activities.

The guiding philosophy in the statement is laudable. Boards establish vision; provide a supportive structure to accomplish the objectives of public education; cause the system to be accountable to the local community; and serve as key advocates on behalf of students and schools in order to advance communities' visions for schools, pursue community goals, encourage progress, energize systemic change and deal with children as whole persons. Most school boards agree with such statements (they are not new). Yet, the rhetoric begs the issue of the realities of school boards' performance in leading and governing according to such praiseworthy broad statements.

Suggesting that changes may be needed in the structure of governance cannot be equated with a conspiracy to remove the schools from citizen control. Whether one agrees with specific ideas for structural changes or not—ideas which range from municipal authorities appointing school boards to state licensing of individual schools—the debate does not exclude citizens from exercising some type of political control of the schools. The Twentieth Century Fund-Danforth Foundation Task Force on School Governance, for example, does not call for dismantling the present system, but, rather, makes concrete suggestions for restructuring the roles and responsibilities of boards so that they become more effective policymaking bodies.

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The call for governance reform is not emanating from a monolithic group of national reformers. Indeed, there are major disagreements among advocates of governance reform, but there is agreement that the evidence of problems (from direct observations to data from school boards themselves) cannot be ignored. The critics agree that all too commonly:

- boards are not providing far-reaching or politically risk-taking leadership for education reform
- boards have become another level of administration, often micro-managing the school district
- boards, particularly in diverse communities, are so splintered by their attempts to represent special interests or board members' individual political needs that the boards cannot govern
- boards have broad goals but lack the capacity for strong goal setting and planning to give direction to school systems
- boards are not spending adequate time on educating themselves about the issues or on educational policymaking
- boards have not provided leadership with other agencies and organizations necessary to meet the human and social needs of students
- boards do not exercise adequate policy oversight, nor do they have adequate accountability processes and

processes for communicating about schools and the school system with the public

- boards' actions are less impressive than their rhetoric in devolving decisionmaking to schools
- boards exhibit little capacity to develop positive and productive lasting relationships with their superintendents
- boards pay little or no attention to their governance performance and to their needs for on-going development of their capacity to govern
- boards in conflicted communities tend to make decisions in response to the "issue of the day" while boards in more stable communities tend to govern to maintain the *status quo*.

At the local level, however, school boards enjoyed a great deal of grass-roots support and were viewed as an important mechanism for representative government.

Obviously, not all school boards are equally guilty of these lapses in leadership. Exceptions can be found in urban, rural and small town districts. However, IEL's 1986 study findings and the 1990 self-assessment data show the majority of better performing school boards among the 15,000 plus school districts are found, not surprisingly, in the nation's more homogeneous and affluent suburbs.

Problems of School Boards

Revisiting the 1986 Findings[2]

IEL's 1986 study on school boards found that boards had been largely ignored in the first wave of the education reform process that began in 1983. The report suggested that this neglect would adversely affect the reform movement's momentum. The study concluded that uninvolved and uninformed local school boards would make the reforms more difficult to implement.

IEL's 1986 study sought to focus attention on school boards as corporate governing bodies. Data were collected from more than 400 school board chairs in nine major Standard Metropolitan Areas (SMAs): Hartford (Conn.), Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Dallas-Ft. Worth, the San Francisco Bay area, Denver, Indianapolis, Columbus (Ohio), and Pittsburgh. Nine case

studies were carried out in larger school districts (10,000 or more students) in each of the areas, and more than 300 interviews were conducted with diverse individuals in each of the nine SMAs. All board members in the nine case-study districts were also surveyed. Questionnaires were also sent to rural school boards in Idaho, Iowa, and Wyoming.

As the IEL study team collected data, we began to understand why reformers refrained from open assaults on school boards. The team discovered that school boards enjoyed a great deal of grass-roots support and were viewed as an important mechanism for representative government. Locally elected boards dealt with two of the most important elements in citizen's lives: their children and tax dollars. Irrespective of how they perceived their own school boards, citizens were reluctant to lose local access to and control of those responsible for shaping policy on these singularly important matters. Citizens also perceived the school board as a "buffer" between the community and professional educators.

A common complaint was that boards spend too much of their time dealing with administrative trivia and too little time on major substantive concerns, such as the quality of the education program and academic outcomes.

This grass-roots support for the school board, however, is somewhat paradoxical. As journalist Neal Peirce stated in his preface to the IEL study, "this report throws sudden and welcome light on that dark island of American governance." Although interviewees in the study and others may support the school board structure vis-a-vis other possible governance arrangements, very few respondents, including rather sophisticated and civically engaged citizens, know very much about the role and responsibility of local school boards. Most Americans are only episodically involved with the schools and their knowledge tends to be anecdotal.

Civic illiteracy about school boards has widespread ramifications. Public indifference is certainly reflected in the abysmally low voter turnout that characterizes most school board elections. It is not uncommon, for example, to have only 5 to 15 percent of the eligible voters participate in school board elections, which in most states are held at different times during the year than more publicized general elections. The removal of school boards from the political party structure in the majority of states (while originally well-intentioned) also contributes to their isolation and lack of political clout, according to many who were interviewed.

The chairs of local boards in the 1986 study sample reaffirmed the common complaint that boards spend too much of their time dealing with administrative trivia and too little time on major substantive concerns, such as the quality of the education program and academic outcomes. Respondents also expressed concern about the diminished trusteeship concept of board service and the number of growing special-interest representatives who seek election to school boards. Such behavior increasingly exacerbated interpersonal tension on boards in the study and made it difficult for the members to function effectively as a group. Many boards behaved poorly in public and did not know how to disagree amicably or resolve conflicts. As a result, the image of boards frequently suffered, and the reputation of the public schools in the community was further diminished.

There was in 1986, and continues to be, an elusive but definite sense that school board service is not attracting the civic and business leaders with political clout as it once did in many communities.

OBSTACLES TO SCHOOL BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

IEL's study of school boards identified a number of common obstacles to school board effectiveness.

- Public apathy
- Lack of public understanding of the policy-making role of the board
- Poor or sporadic relationships with state policymakers
- The need to improve teaching within the framework of collective bargaining
- Lack of time and an operating structure for focusing on education issues
- Discrepancy between time boards invest and their satisfaction with their accomplishments and ability to determine their priorities
- Difficulty in developing a "collection" of individuals into a policy-making board
- Reactive rather than proactive behavior
- Lack of strong links to other community sectors and government entities

There was in 1986, and continues to be, an elusive but definite sense that school board service is not attracting the civic and business leaders with political clout as it once did in many communities. In the urban school districts particularly, there is a perceived loss of access to civic power bases as influential

citizens, for a variety of reasons, opt not to serve on local school boards. Many persons interviewed for the study felt that the pipeline of talented and influential community volunteers who might have served on local boards in the past is closing down. The plus side of the change is that urban boards in these school districts are more representative.

School boards from urban and changing school districts in the study faced growing problems as the political constituency of the schools shrank and the student population became increasingly minority, poor, and politically disenfranchised. With less than one quarter of the households in the country having children enrolled in public schools, the political muscle of older, more affluent citizens was expanding at the expense of the clients of the schools.

State-level changes reflected a lack of confidence by governors, legislators, business leaders and others in school boards and in educators at the local level.

A number of other important issues relating to school boards were identified by respondents to the IEL questionnaire and interviewees in the nine case-study districts. The continuing issue of board-superintendent relationships was cited often. In many systems, there was an incessant need to distinguish between the school board's policymaking prerogatives and the school superintendent's administrative responsibilities. We found frequent conflict when the lines of demarcation between policy and administration were too precisely delineated. There were fewer problems in situations in which ambiguities and gray areas were acknowledged and mutual trust and candor prevailed in board-superintendent relationships.

Problems with the media also were articulated by many board members who cited their frustration with newspaper and television coverage that stressed only the negative. They were annoyed that in major metropolitan areas with literally hundreds of schools the widely watched prime-time newscast would focus only on the individual school in which a fight, strike, boycott or like incident might have occurred.

The 1986 survey data showed centralization to be a key concern among school board members. State governors, legislatures, and education departments were assuming more direct authority over public education. In numerous states, new statutes and regulations imposed many new requirements and constraints on the traditional prerogatives of local boards. Local officials were rarely consulted as these policies were conceptualized and enacted. This lack of consultation was re-

sented by local school boards and superintendents, who felt ignored and bypassed. Most important, however, these state-level changes reflected a lack of confidence by governors, legislators, business leaders and others in school boards and in educators at the local level. Many boards in the study said they had initiated reforms themselves in areas of state-legislated reforms. Boards expressed concern that many state reforms fell well short of programs in the better districts. Some state mandates were actually forcing their boards into regressive positions, e.g., state requirements for norm-referenced tests rather than criterion-referenced tests.

The IEL report anticipated contradictions between increased state control in the early years of the reform movement and the decentralization to school sites espoused by more recent reformers. It is worth reemphasizing that school boards continued to be neglected in these dichotomous "top-down" or "bottom-up" modes of school reform during the rest of the 1980s.

The information comprises the only existing national data base on the condition of school board governance and leadership and the data are consistent with observations of school board critics.

School Boards Assess Themselves

The most powerful evidence of local governance problems comes from school boards themselves. From 1988 to 1990, school boards in 16 states participated in the demonstration of the Institute for Educational Leadership's school board self-assessment and improvement planning process, developed in cooperation with 14 state school boards associations. IEL compiled and analyzed data from 70 urban school boards, 75 suburban boards, and 121 rural/small-town boards. In 128 of the school districts, superintendents also completed a questionnaire. Although self-assessment data from a self-selected sample of school boards cannot be applied to all boards, the information, nevertheless, comprises the only existing national data base on the condition of school board governance and leadership. The data are consistent with observations of school board critics. They also substantiate the findings from IEL's 1986 study, which included the perceptions of the community as well as of the school boards.

The self-assessment instrument, the *Inventory of Board Effectiveness*, has 15 sections corresponding to the following 15 "Indicators of School Board Effectiveness" developed from the findings of the 1986 study. An effective board:

I. provides leadership for public education and is an advocate for the educational needs and interests of children and youth.

II. works to influence policies of state and local governmental bodies and other organizations whose decisions affect children and youth.

III. seeks and responds to many forms of parent and community participation in the school district.

IV. has a comprehensive program for communications with its various constituencies, including policies and procedures for working with the media.

V. encourages and respects diversity, deals openly and straight forwardly with controversy within the board and the community and follows democratic decisionmaking processes.

VI. uses strategic planning to set educational goals and determines the means of accomplishing them.

VII. works to ensure an adequate flow of resources and achieves equity in their distribution.

VIII. establishes and follows policy to govern its own policymaking decisions.

IX. exercises continuing policy oversight of education programs and their management, drawing information for this purpose from many sources and knowing enough to ask the right questions.

X. establishes and implements procedures for selecting and evaluating the superintendent.

XI. recognizes the dilemma of distinguishing policy from administration and periodically clarifies these separate areas of responsibility in consultation with the superintendent.

XII. promotes constructive relations with its employees and works to create conditions that enhance productivity.

XIII. establishes clear expectations for the conduct of its members.

XIV. establishes and follows policies and procedures to manage its own operations.

XV. has procedures for self-assessment and invests in its own development, using diverse approaches that address the needs of the board as a whole, as well as those of individual board members.

Each section of the Inventory has specific assessment items. The Inventory uses a six-point rating scale that asks each board member to rate the degree of his/her agreement with the statement (assessment item) in the context of his/her board service. Completed self-assessment instruments from all board members are scored to produce a mean rating for each assessment item as well as a mean rating for each of the 15 sections of the Inventory.

Generally, the participating school boards in the demonstration rated themselves least effective in areas where boards are highly criticized.

Boards receive an effectiveness profile with the actual mean ratings as described above as well as a chart to guide a board when it reviews the results of its self-assessment. A score of 4.0 and below means that a board perceives itself as not very effective, a score of 4.1 to 5.0 indicates a self-assessment slightly to somewhat effective, and a score of 5.1 to 6.0 suggests that a board views itself as generally effective. Each item addresses a behavior, decision, action, or set of expectations the board can control. In other words, the behaviors implicit in the assessment items are not dependent on outside resources, or on the behavior of another government body or nonmembers.

Generally, the participating school boards in the demonstration rated themselves "least effective" in areas where boards are highly criticized. While the boards in the sample may have been slightly more generous in their self-assessments than external observers would have been, the major point is that boards agreed with their detractors. And, most important, these boards perceived themselves as least effective in the core elements of governance—leadership, planning and goal setting, involving parents and the community, influence on others (general government, state policymakers, agencies serving children/youth/ families, the private sector, etc.), policy oversight, board operations, and board development. In all the above areas, the total sample's ratings were from 3.3 to 4.5. Across all 15 Indicators of Effectiveness, these boards rated themselves at 4.5, only somewhat effective.

Figure 1 on page 64 illustrates the relative effectiveness rankings of all urban boards, the subsample of large urban boards, all suburban boards, and all rural/small-town boards in the total data base within each of the 15 sections of the Inventory. In Tables I through XV (see pages 65–80), data are presented for key assessment items within each of the sections by subgroup within the national sample of boards, and for the full sample of superintendents who completed the inventory.

The superintendents' ratings appear somewhat counterintuitive. They rated boards as well as, or somewhat more favorably than, the boards rated themselves. There are several possible explanations for this. First, IEL did not break down the superintendent data by type of school district, whether urban, large urban, suburban, or rural/small-town. Also, superintendents may have been concerned that, despite all precautions, their assessments would fall into the hands of their boards. It is also possible that some superintendents identify their own performance with that of their boards.

A particularly compelling finding is that although dissimilar in many ways, boards responded with nearly identical assessments of their strengths and weaknesses.

Findings from the Data

A particularly compelling finding is that although dissimilar in many ways, boards responded with nearly identical assessments of their strengths and weaknesses. Urban boards, in the largest districts in particular, frequently rated themselves lower on any given assessment item, but there is fairly remarkable consistency in the relative ranking for each board group within the total sample.

Under Indicator I (Leadership), each subgroup in the sample rated its effectiveness highest in serving as an advocate in the community for public education and lowest among the items in meeting regularly with local government officials/bodies to discuss education and related issues. In Indicator VI (Planning and Setting Goals), each subsample of boards rated itself highest in defining district goals and major objectives and lowest in communicating progress toward these goals to the community. In Indicator IX (Policy Oversight), each subsample rated itself highest in having oversight procedures and lowest in using outcome measures to assess progress toward the goals and objectives of the school district. In fact, the two or three lowest-rated assessment items in each of the 15 sections of the Inventory are the same for each of the categories of

boards. The importance of this remarkable consistency lies in the fact that, without going too far out on the limb of extrapolation, the data document consistent problems across local governance of education.

The following discussion of the data focuses on the board's function as a governing body, on comparisons of urban, rural/small-town and suburban boards, and on boards' leadership vis-a-vis education reform.

Governing

School boards, by their own admission, are not functioning well as strategic planning and goal-setting policy bodies. This governance responsibility is critical to education reform. Boards, overall, rated themselves only slightly effective in involving parents and the community in district goal setting, seeking community views on the performance of the schools, communicating with their various constituencies about the school district, and seeking community perceptions about the performance of the board.

School boards, by their own admission, are not functioning well as strategic planning and goal-setting policy bodies.

School boards in the national sample rated themselves highest among the 15 Indicators in Decision Making (the only rating at 5.1, or at or above moderately effective), Resource Allocation (4.8), Employee Relations (4.8), and Expectations for Board Member Conduct (4.7). All of these "higher" ratings (except for Decision Making) fall between slightly and moderately effective according to the IEL rating scale. Two of these highest-assessed areas are the most "mechanistic" of boards' responsibilities—Employee Relations (in most districts governed by legal contracts), and Resource Allocation (more and more controlled by what the boards are mandated to support within their budgets and by employee contracts). Interestingly, on the item where boards have the greatest discretion (equitable distribution of resources across schools and programs), all urban boards rated their effectiveness lower than did their suburban and rural/small town counterparts.

In Decision Making, all boards judged themselves as just moderately effective. The assessment instrument in this instance focused on the *process* for making decisions, not on the subject of boards' decisionmaking. (In response to a request of the West Virginia legislature's Oversight Commission on

Education Accountability (H.C.R. 30), a study of the decisions and actions of local school boards over five years was undertaken as part of a larger study of the effectiveness of local education governance in that state. The study found that although boards rated themselves highest in decisionmaking, they spent only 3 percent of their time on education policy and oversight.)[3]

The Operating Board

Boards' communication functions appear to be a major concern. The data revealed few boards with policies for dealing with the media, communicating effectively with community groups, or providing opportunities in the community for discussion of educational issues.

Effective group decisionmaking processes are critical if boards are to govern effectively. Interestingly, all boards gave themselves high scores in decisionmaking relative to other Indicator areas, although they also rated themselves relatively low in other abilities vital to effective group decisionmaking, e.g., promoting trust and respect for the full board, possessing the interpersonal skills needed to resolves conflicts among board members, or having members who communicate well with each other.

Conflict among school board members may be rooted in the absence of a common definition of the board's role among individual board members, a particularly acute problem for all urban boards in the sample.

Boards are often criticized for the amount of conflict displayed among members and their seeming incapacity to negotiate consensual leadership. Data from the sample suggest that this conflict may be rooted in the absence of a common definition of the board's role among individual board members, a particularly acute problem for all urban boards in the sample. Having different views of the board's role is often at the root of internal board difficulties and the inability of board members to understand the behaviors and positions of their fellow board members. Without reaching some consensus on the role of the board, members will also undertake more and more activities in order to respond to the multiple views of a board's role.

Superintendents and Boards

The effectiveness of school boards and progress toward education reforms are, in large measure, determined by the board-superintendent relationship. These data show that the boards'

processes for managing board-superintendent conflicts are weak and they use inconsistent performance objectives to evaluate superintendents. The boards rated themselves as not very effective in avoiding involvement in the administration of their districts and in considering the board-superintendent relationship as part of the superintendent's evaluation. Boards in the sample appear ineffective in having processes for managing conflicts between the board and the superintendent. This is a particularly important finding in light of the decreasing tenure among superintendents generally and the acute problem of superintendent turnover in large cities.

Board Development

The effectiveness of school boards and progress toward education reforms are, in large measure, determined by the board-superintendent relationship

A final highlight from the data is perhaps most telling. All boards in the sample rated themselves poorly in Indicator XV (Board Development). The only assessment item with a score above 4.5 in this Indicator is for involvement in state school boards associations' activities. However, board development activities of these associations are, for the most part, geared to individuals who serve on boards, not to development of boards as corporate governing bodies. These data, again, confirm the findings from IEL's 1986 study, which found less than one-third of the boards in the nine metropolitan-area sample had ever conducted any performance self-assessment. Of these boards, only 25 percent had undertaken any kind of follow-up development activities.

The new self-assessment data on board development are particularly discouraging for the total urban and large urban board samples. Their ratings are below 3.0 for assessing performance regularly, using input from their superintendents in any board self-assessment, and taking action to improve performance. Within the 266-board sample, the large urban boards were most critical of the time required to complete the self-assessment instrument, which averaged less than one and one-half hours, inclusive of responses to open-ended questions for each of the 15 Inventory sections. If the members of large urban boards believe analyzing their performance is not an important use of their time, in the context of the current state of urban education leadership and governance, they are indeed not fulfilling one of the major expectations of responsible governing bodies.

Differences Among Urban, Suburban, and Rural/Small-Town Boards

IEL's 1986 study found many more similarities among boards across types of communities than differences. The new IEL board self-assessment data confirm the earlier findings. However, rural and suburban boards consistently rated themselves higher in most assessment items and overall across the instrument. These boards generally operate in less contentious political environments and can govern with assumptions about more cohesive community values. In addition, board members in the suburban, rural, and small-town school districts are still much more apt to come from traditional leaders in their communities, have broad community or other leadership experience, and be members of or spouses of the power structures in their communities.

School boards in the nation's large urban districts are the most visible and attract the greatest media attention. The behaviors of and perceptions about these boards tend to give definition to the condition of local governance, but governance problems are no less acute in many other school districts. The Kentucky state legislature, for example, instituted reforms to control nepotism and other negative behaviors of some rural boards in that state. The West Virginia legislature mandated a study of school boards and appropriated resources for board self-assessment and development for all boards in that largely rural state.

Continued failure of the urban districts will have devastating consequences not only for individual students, but collectively upon the social and civic fabric of the nation.

However, continued failure of the urban districts will have devastating consequences not only for individual students, but collectively upon the social and civic fabric of the nation. The evidence continues to mount that boards governing these districts are in trouble and seemingly cannot move beyond behaviors which inhibit or, in many cases, preclude achieving systemic education reforms. The breakdown in urban education governance was dramatically illustrated by the unprecedented turnover among urban superintendents in 1990–91. The tenure among superintendents in the nation's 45 largest school districts is now only 2.5 years. The effect of this on education reform is devastating. Systemic reforms are complex and require consistent professional leadership over time. Accomplishment of such reforms requires school boards that have the will and skills to resolve conflicts among members in order to provide enlightened and consistent leadership, that spend the major-

ity of their time learning about and paying attention to policy (its formulation and oversight), that do not use superintendents to serve the political needs of members, and that reflect regularly upon their performance. Exit interviews with many departing superintendents cite unresolved conflicts within boards as prime factors in the turnover of chief administrators.

The IEL data demonstrate almost a full rating point difference between suburban boards and large urban boards for many of the key assessment items. For instance, in Decision Making, suburban boards rated themselves at 4.9 on dealing with a problem posed by a bloc or clique attempting to control board deliberations; the large urban boards rated themselves at 4.1. The large urban boards rated themselves at 4.2 in effectiveness in defining district goals and major objectives as part of the boards' planning processes. The suburban boards rated themselves at 5.1. In Indicator VII (Resource Allocation), the large urban boards rated themselves at 4.2, while the suburban boards rated themselves at 4.9. These data are discouraging in the degree to which they document weaknesses of urban school boards in absolutely critical governance areas.

Too many current school boards are not leading and governing on the level required to recreate the structure and substance of public education.

School Board Performance and Education Reform

The nation's education reform objectives require strong leadership and governance. Evidence from the first near-decade of attempts to improve educational attainment confirm the ability of the current governance structure (state and local) to institute more of the same. The evidence is that more of the same has not improved student outcomes.

Too many current school boards are not leading and governing on the level required to recreate the structure and substance of public education. While there is no "objective" analytical research proving causal relationships between specific governance behaviors and failure to achieve specific education reforms, documented public behaviors, school boards' own self-assessment data and expressions of frustration, and the short tenure of superintendents in urban school districts describe an institution that is in trouble. The evidence casts doubt on the ability of school boards to meet the challenges for restructuring public education.

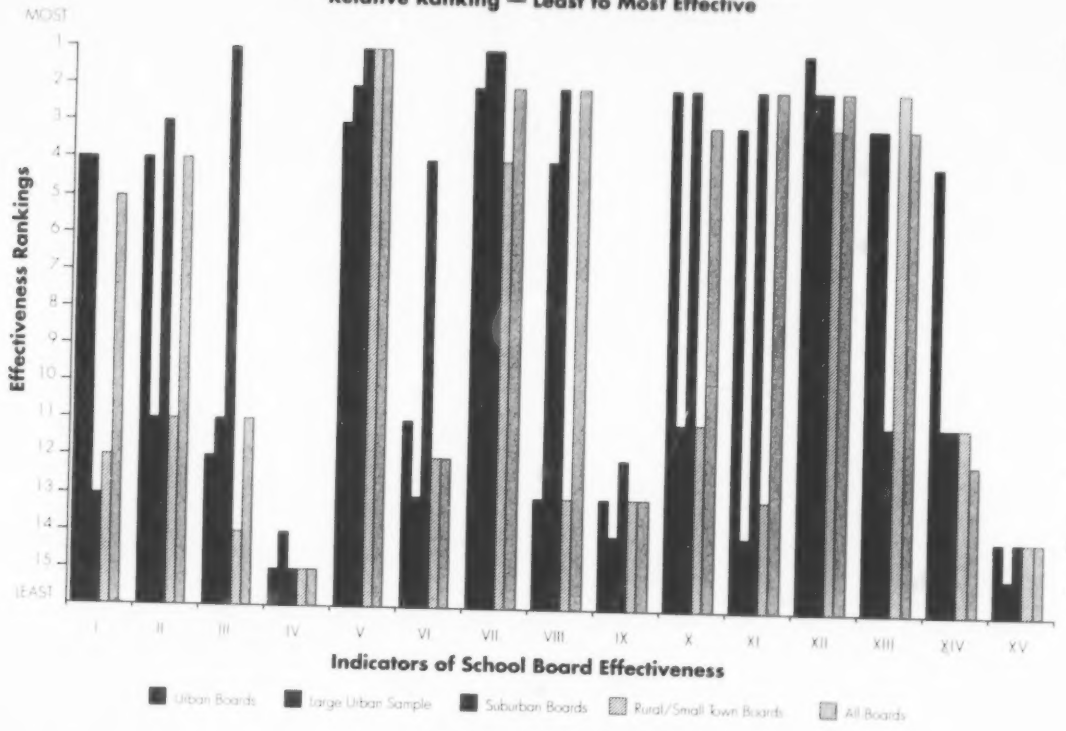
Boards' data show particularly low ratings in meeting regularly with local government officials or other bodies to discuss education and related issues. Those in the urban board sample only slightly agreed that they anticipated community issues and trends affecting their school districts; large urban boards in the sample rated themselves lower. Indicator III (Parent and Community Participation) is particularly critical to the reform agenda, yet among the key items the boards gave themselves only "slightly effective" ratings on involving parents in setting goals and planning for individual schools. As is generally true across the assessment items, the large urban boards rated themselves the lowest. All boards rated themselves poorly in seeking information from the community about its views on the performance of the schools; again, the urban boards rated themselves slightly lower than others. Performance in this sample of key assessment items is directly related to a board's ability to lead on reform initiatives.

Board leadership is critical to pulling together other human services agencies and organizations to meet student and family needs, irrespective of the socio-economic status of a particular student or community. In this area, the boards' self-assessment is devastating and confirms IEL's findings from case studies in 1986. Boards' ratings are *lowest* on influencing others (Indicator IV) among all 15 Indicators. The key assessment items presented refer to this primary task of board leadership—that of "crossing boundaries" to meet the needs of students. Yet, across all boards the effectiveness rating on this point falls below 3.5; it is 3.1 for large urban boards. This finding especially relegates school boards to outmoded roles—and does not bode well for the achievement or well-being of many of their students.

FIGURE 1

SCHOOL BOARD DATA

The Fifteen Indicators of School Board Effectiveness
Relative Ranking — Least to Most Effective



Indicators of School Board Effectiveness

I. Leadership
II. Communications
III. Parent/Community Involvement
IV. Influence on Others
V. Decision-Making
VI. Planning/Setting Goals
VII. Resource Allocation
VIII. Policy Development
IX. Policy Oversight
X. Selection and Evaluation of the Superintendent
XI. Working with the Superintendent
XII. Employee Relations
XIII. Expectations for Board Members
XIV. Board Operations
XV. Board Development

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SCHOOL BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT DATA

Tables of Ratings for Key Board Self-Assessment Items From The School Board Effectiveness Inventory Indicators of School Board Effectiveness

Notes:

1. The number in the Overall Mean box represents the mean rating for *all* assessment items for each Indicator. For instance, Indicator I, Leadership, has a total of 7 assessment items in the self-assessment instrument. The Overall Mean of 4.4 for Urban Boards is the mean for all 7 items, not just for the 4 key assessment items that are displayed in the table.

2. The column titled Large Urban Sample displays the mean ratings for a subset of 14 boards in large urban districts, which are included in the overall Urban Boards category.

TABLE I

I. LEADERSHIP

An Effective Board provides leadership for public education and is an advocate for the educational needs and interests of children and youth.

Overall Mean:

Our Board:

- Serves as an advocate in the community for public education
- Anticipates community issues and trends affecting the school district
- Works cooperatively with other organizations that serve students and their families
- Meets regularly with local government officials/bodies to discuss education and related issues

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
4.4	**4.2**	**4.0**	**4.6**	**4.3**	**4.5**
5.2	5.0	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3
4.4	4.0	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.8
4.8	4.6	5.0	5.1	4.9	4.9
3.5	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.9

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE II

II. COMMUNICATIONS

An Effective Board has a comprehensive program for communications with its various constituencies, including policies and procedures for working with the media.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.4**	**4.1**	**4.8**	**4.7**	**4.6**	**5.0**
Our Board:						
• Informs parents and the community about district goals and objectives	4.7	4.3	5.0	4.7	4.8	5.0
• Communicates school district progress (performance) to parents and the larger community	5.0	4.3	5.1	5.0	5.0	5.3
• Has comprehensive board policies governing relationships with the media	3.7	3.4	4.2	4.0	3.9	4.4
I believe that the community perceives the board to be:						
• Planning carefully to define the goals and objectives of the school system	4.3	3.9	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.8
• Working cooperatively with the superintendent	5.0	4.7	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.3
• Making decisions in thoughtful ways with adequate information	4.2	3.9	4.7	4.6	4.5	5.1

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE III

III. PARENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

An Effective Board seeks and responds to many forms of parent and community participation in the school system.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.2**	**4.1**	**5.0**	**4.0**	**4.4**	**4.6**
Our Board:						
• Involves parents in the education of their children	4.8	4.4	5.1	5.0	4.9	5.1
• Involves parents in setting goals and planning for individual schools	4.0	3.7	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.3
• Seeks information from the community about its views on the performance of the schools	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.3

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE IV

IV. INFLUENCE ON OTHERS

An Effective Board works to influence policies of state and local governmental bodies and other organizations whose decisions affect children and youth. **(Note: This is an Inactive to Extremely Active rating scale.)**

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**3.3**	**3.5**	**3.2**	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.4**
Our Board is:						
• In seeking financial support for the school district and public education generally with:						
– the state legislature	3.9	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0
• In influencing formulation of educational policy and policies affecting education by:						
– city/town/county government	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.0	3.2	3.2
– local human service agencies	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9
• In coordinating programs with:						
– local human service agencies	3.3	3.1	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.4

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE V

V. DECISION-MAKING

An Effective Board encourages and respects diversity, deals openly and straightforwardly with controversy within the board and the community, and follows democratic decision-making procedures.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.5**	**4.3**	**5.0**	**5.8**	**5.1**	**4.9**
Our Board:						
• Is not dominated by blocks or cliques of board members who attempt to control board deliberations	4.3	4.1	4.9	5.1	4.7	4.7
• Works to find grounds for compromise and consensus when there are disagreements	4.4	4.0	4.9	5.2	4.8	5.1
• Exhibits effective decision-making skills	4.2	3.9	4.7	5.1	4.6	4.7
• Bases decisions on its public deliberations and not on small group, private conversations	4.2	4.0	4.6	4.9	4.5	4.5
• Expects its members to respect decisions of the majority of the board	5.1	4.9	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.2

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE VI

VI. PLANNING AND SETTING GOALS

An Effective Board uses strategic planning to set educational goals and determine the means for accomplishing them.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.3**	***3.8***	**4.7**	**4.6**	**4.5**	**4.6**
Our Board:						
• Defines district goals and major objectives as part of its planning process	4.7	4.2	5.1	4.8	4.8	5.0
• Reviews measures (indicators) of school district performance as part of the district's planning process	4.2	3.9	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.6
• Requires individual schools to set goals/objectives consistent with district goals and objectives	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.6
• Communicates school district progress toward goals to the community	3.9	3.7	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.4

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE VII

VII. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

An Effective Board works to ensure an adequate flow of resources and achieves equity in their distribution.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.6**	**4.4**	**5.0**	**4.8**	**4.8**	**5.0**
Our Board:						
• Ensures equitable distribution of resources across schools and programs.	4.6	4.2	4.9	4.8	4.7	5.3
• Provides adequate resources for staff development.	4.7	4.4	5.1	4.9	4.9	5.0

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE VIII

VIII. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

An Effective Board establishes and follows policy to govern its own policymaking responsibilities.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.6**	**4.2**	**4.9**	**4.4**	**4.6**	**5.1**
Our Board:						
• Follows specified procedures for developing board policy	4.8	4.6	5.1	5.0	4.9	5.4
• Develops understanding of issues before considering policy options	4.7	4.4	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.1
• Defines expected outcomes and accountability measures when adopting policies and programs	3.9	3.6	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.4
• Reviews/updates policy manual on a regular basis	4.4	4.0	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.9

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

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TABLE XI

IX. POLICY OVERSIGHT

An Effective Board exercises continuing policy oversight of education programs and their management, drawing information for this purpose from many sources and knowing enough to ask the right questions.

Overall Mean:

Our Board:

- Has procedures for board oversight of education policies and programs
- Uses outcome measures (indicators) to assess progress toward the goals and objectives of the school district
- Has procedures to ensure timely and well-organized information on policy implementation

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
4.0	**3.5**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.2**	**4.5**
4.3	3.8	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.9
3.7	3.4	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1
4.3	3.7	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.9

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

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TABLE X

X. SELECTION AND EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

An Effective Board establishes and implements procedures for selecting and evaluating the superintendent.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.6**	**4.1**	**4.9**	**4.7**	**4.7**	**4.9**
Our Board:						
• Developed a consensus about the desired professional qualities of a superintendent.	5.1	4.8	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.2
• Actively involved the community and staff in defining criteria for a new superintendent.	4.0	3.8	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.4
• Works cooperatively with the superintendent to develop performance objectives consistent with school district goals/objectives.	4.7	4.5	4.8	5.0	4.8	4.9
• Gives useful feedback to the superintendent on how he/she is doing.	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8
• Includes issues concerning the board/superintendent relationship as part of the superintendent's evaluation.	4.3	4.8	4.8	4.4	4.5	5.0

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE XI

XI. WORKING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

An Effective Board recognizes the dilemma of distinguishing policy from administration and periodically clarifies these separate areas in consultation with the superintendent.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

Our Board:	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.5**	**4.0**	**4.9**	**4.4**	**4.6**	**4.9**
• Works with the superintendent in a manner that promotes trust and mutual respect.	4.8	4.5	5.1	5.2	5.0	5.2
• Avoids involvement in administration.	4.1	3.9	4.5	4.7	4.4	4.6
• Works with the superintendent, when new issues arise, to clarify implications for policy and administration.	4.7	4.4	5.1	5.2	5.0	5.1
• Recognizes conflicts between the board and the superintendent.	4.4	4.5	4.9	5.1	4.8	5.0
• Has established processes for managing conflicts between the board and the superintendent.	3.4	3.1	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.1

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE XII

XII. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

An Effective Board promotes constructive relations with its employees and works to create conditions that enhance productivity.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.7**	**4.3**	**4.9**	**4.9**	**4.8**	**5.2**
Our Board:						
• Encourages initiative and leadership from school-based staff	4.6	4.3	4.9	5.0	4.8	5.2
• Has established processes for discussing educational issues and district initiatives with employee groups	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.0	5.4
• Has policies and procedures defining the board's role in the collective bargaining process	4.8	4.7	4.9	4.5	4.7	4.9

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

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TABLE XIII

XIII. EXPECTATIONS FOR BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT

An Effective Board establishes clear expectations for the conduct of its members.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.5**	**4.3**	**4.6**	**5.1**	**4.7**	**4.8**
All Members of Our Board:						
• Hold similar expectations for the behavior of board members	4.8	*4.8*	5.3	5.4	5.1	5.2
• Hold a common view of the board's role	3.9	*3.7*	4.6	4.9	4.4	4.4
• Respect differing opinions and points of view represented on the board	4.4	*4.2*	5.1	5.3	4.9	4.9
• Seek to resolve interpersonal conflicts	4.0	*3.7*	4.8	5.1	4.6	4.7
• Possess the interpersonal skills needed to resolve conflicts among board members	4.0	*3.7*	4.8	5.0	4.6	4.7
• Promote trust and respect for the full board	4.3	*3.6*	4.9	5.2	4.8	4.8

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

TABLE XIV

XIV. BOARD OPERATIONS

An Effective Board establishes and follows policies and procedures to manage its own operations.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

	Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
Overall Mean:	**4.4**	**4.1**	**4.6**	**4.7**	**4.5**	**4.9**
Our Board:						
• Has a comprehensive orientation program for new members.	3.7	3.2	4.1	3.7	3.8	4.3
• Educates new members about key issues facing the school district.	3.8	3.5	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.6
• Devotes adequate attention to education programs and educational outcomes.	3.6	3.4	4.2	4.4	4.0	4.4
• Sets aside time regularly to learn about a current educational issue.	3.9	3.8	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.5
• Spends the majority of its time on policy issues rather than administration.	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.8
• Analyzes the board's use of time.	2.7	2.6	3.3	3.4	3.1	4.3
• Has members who communicate well with each other.	4.2	3.8	4.8	5.1	4.7	4.7

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

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TABLE XV

XV. BOARD DEVELOPMENT

An Effective Board has procedures for self-assessment and invests in its own development, using diverse approaches that address the needs of the board as a whole, as well as those of individual board members.

Overall Mean:

Our Board:

- Assesses its performance on a regular basis.
- Uses input from the superintendent in board self-assessment.
- Takes action to improve performance in areas identified through the board's self-assessment.
- Seeks opportunities for development of the board as a whole.
- Encourages all members of the board to develop skills that enable members to manage conflict situations.
- Sets aside time to learn about current national educational issues.

ASSESSMENT RATINGS

Urban Boards	*Large Urban Sample*	Suburban Boards	Rural/ Small Town Boards	All Boards	All Superintendents
3.4	**3.3**	**3.9**	**4.0**	**3.7**	**4.0**
2.9	2.4	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.4
2.9	2.4	3.5	3.8	3.4	3.6
2.9	2.5	3.5	3.8	3.4	3.6
3.6	3.5	4.2	4.4	4.0	4.4
3.4	3.3	4.1	4.2	3.9	4.2
2.9	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.8

Rating Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have attempted to define the issue of education governance in the context of societal challenges and demands on public education in the remainder of this century and the beginning of the next. This context, coupled with the demonstrated problems of local school boards, calls for rethinking and reforming the governance of schools.

The governing behaviors of school boards reflect, to a great degree, the unresolved social and political issues swirling around them.

The belief that education governance must be reformed is neither a denial of the positive role of these local citizen, and largely voluntary, boards in the nation's history, nor an indictment of the very laudable motives and positive intentions of the majority of the persons who serve on school boards. It would be fair to say that many of the charges about ineffective governance levied against school boards can be levied against the nation's other governing institutions—charges such as governance catatonia in the face of conflicting constituent demands and increasingly political responses to multiplying special interest groups. The governing behaviors of school boards reflect, to a great degree, the unresolved social and political issues swirling around them. They result from the nation's escalating demographic changes and seeming inability to chart a course to meet domestic challenges and to define who and what we are as the American Century ends.

The structure for governing may be different from one school district to the next. The strategies employed to meet the purposes of and expected outcomes from public education may also vary enormously. But, whatever the structure and strategies, if those governing public schools cannot govern well, they become impediments to education reform. The act

of governing can never be without consequences. Some define a good board of education as one that does not get in the superintendent's way. But, while such a board laudably may not be administering the schools, it may not be meeting other responsibilities, such as involving the public in determining goals, educating the public about education issues, providing policy leadership on behalf of the public, or establishing accountability criteria.

The measure of effective education governance is in the collective ability of board members to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities across the spectrum of responsible governing behaviors. Dysfunctional governance is obvious in too many of the nation's cities, and is present, but less visible, in many suburban, small town and rural communities. The causes are varied. Some are rooted in behaviors under the control of school boards, but some are not, i.e., state legislative codes for education which are increasingly ponderous and prescriptive but which have not addressed the structure and function of local boards since the early part of this century.

The measure of effective education governance is in the collective ability of board members to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities across the spectrum of responsible governing behaviors.

We believe governance must be reformed, but we do not believe there is one perfect structure, the "dotting every 'i' and crossing every 't'" that will then produce effective governance in all school districts. For instance, there are recommendations, including the Twentieth Century Fund-Danforth Foundation Task Force's report, to make all urban boards appointed by the mayors and city councils. This change would help to solve one structural problem, e.g., the need for collaboration between and among the schools and other human and social services, but might result in even more politicized boards than we now have in these districts. In addition, there is ample evidence that less-than-enlightened, even corrupt city government appoints similar school boards. For example, the Jersey City, New Jersey, school board, before being relieved of its authority by the state, was an appointed board that mirrored the less-than-good government of that city. Chicago schools were governed by an appointed board during all the years that they were becoming, according to William Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education, the worst schools in the nation. Virginia has all appointed school boards but, with the exception of some districts in Northern Virginia, has never been known for the outstanding quality of its elementary and secondary

schools. The City of Baltimore's school board is appointed and the superintendent all but hand-picked by the mayor. Even with that city's current, respected mayor's appointees, the Baltimore school board's leadership thus far has not produced results any different from other major cities. In fact, that city is turning over nine of its schools to a for-profit corporation for five years.

There are seemingly reasonable suggestions that the mega-cities and very large city school districts are simply too large to change dramatically and to govern in ways that produce desired outcomes. There is merit to the argument, but the break up of New York City into 32 community school districts governing grades K–8 in the late 1960s did not result in improved student achievement. In fact, achievement has worsened in the intervening years. These elected community school boards are highly politicized, and in some instances, have been shown to be corrupt. The change to smaller community school districts in New York City has not increased citizen involvement in school board elections, and parental involvement in the schools, in general, is as low as in other large urban school districts.

The change to smaller community school districts in New York City has not increased citizen involvement in school board elections, and parental involvement in the schools, in general, is as low as in other large urban school districts.

In a trend that appears to be accelerating, many cities initiated changes in the structure of representation on their school boards, installing boards composed of persons from separate electoral districts within school districts. This structural change accomplished its immediate objective—school boards more representative of the school populations—but has produced the unintended consequence of more politicized and divided school boards whose members are subject to competing constituent pressures and are frequently unable to resolve conflicts among members.

John Chubb and Terry Moe advocate abolition of school districts, particularly as operators of schools, preferring each school as an independent entity responsible to the state. These authors contend that real change in schools can only be accomplished in individual schools controlled by "the market." The legislation in some states (notably Minnesota and Colorado) to allow charter schools, i.e., schools individually and independently chartered by states and controlled by their own governing bodies, is a step toward what might ultimately be a national "system" of independent public schools responsible

only to states. There has been little or no discussion about the potential negative consequences of a system of independent public schools. What happens to the broader community's interest in the public schools and the collective impact of schools as a public institution? What will sustain the collective body politic's sense of responsibility and willingness to support public education? Will these schools further fragment communities and preclude building a sense of community beyond concerns with an individual school? It may be that a reasoned debate would conclude that such schools are the "last, best chance" to restructure teaching and learning and that possible positive outcomes outweigh potential negative ones. But, the possible consequences should be debated.

The whole functioning of education governance needs to be assessed, expectations of education governance need to be redefined, and current structural and behavioral problems that are barriers to effective governance need to be identified.

We believe the above examples of structural reforms accomplished or recommended to solve less than the whole of the problems of education governance reinforce the arguments in this book. The whole functioning of education governance needs to be assessed, expectations of education governance need to be redefined, and current structural and behavioral problems that are barriers to effective governance need to be identified. The comprehensiveness of this approach does not mean that too little is known to enact some basic reforms, but rather is recommended in an effort to convince those who would undertake reforms of governance that the visible problems are interrelated, solutions will be politically and structurally complex and will, rightly, employ different strategies for achievement.

However, we also begin our recommendations with one absolute premise. Governance reforms of major magnitude, structural and behavioral, cannot be accomplished within the institution of school boards, irrespective of sincere efforts by that community. No institution, particularly a political institution with over a 200-year history and in excess of 15,000 units, can accomplish major structural reforms by itself. However, school boards, where they and those who represent them are willing, should be encouraged to take the initiative in reforming governance.

Recommendations

The process for reforming education governance will not be even, and where undertaken, will be an issue competing for concerted attention with an array of major issues facing states and localities. Even where a comprehensive framework for reforming governance might be agreed to, the implementation of reforms likely will be uneven. Some reforms will be undertaken more easily than others; some will require state policy changes of great magnitude based upon substantive policy analysis and development. And, there will be issues of political trade-offs which will determine how far and how fast reforms will occur.

In all likelihood, the majority of school districts, at least through this decade, will continue the governance of public schools separate from units of general government. States, while possibly chartering "independent" public schools (as in Colorado and Minnesota), will continue to administer and govern public elementary and secondary education through a structure of sub-state units, i.e., school districts. The number of school districts will probably decrease overall, even as very large districts may be restructured into smaller districts. States may institute different strategies and degrees of governance reforms for different types of school districts, i.e., major changes in urban districts and minimal strategies for change in suburban, small town and rural districts. Some states may enact basic reforms affecting governing bodies of all districts, along with yet other reforms affecting just some types of districts. And, of course, some states may do nothing.

Governance reforms of major magnitude, structural and behavioral, cannot be accomplished within the institution of school boards, irrespective of sincere efforts by that community.

Initiatives to improve and, perhaps, radically restructure local governance, may arise locally. If sufficient communities of different types undertook governance reforms, state policy-makers would have a solid base of understanding and political support to broaden the impact of locally initiated and developed reforms. We believe that local experimentation to improve governance should be actively encouraged by states, and at the very least, allowed by them. We also believe that irrespective of the governmental level initiating reforms and possible restructuring of governance, it is imperative to involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders in public education—government officials, parents, business leaders, community leaders, school boards, superintendents, teachers—and to assure that the process for considering and determining reforms incorporates perspectives and expertise external to the stakeholders.

Our recommendations are organized in two sections: *What States Can Do* and *What Localities Can Do*. Action in the political sphere is never so neatly compartmentalized by governmental level, but there are actions that can more appropriately and, in the instance of the states, authoritatively originate at one level or the other. Because public education is a function of the states, almost any major change in roles and responsibilities and changes in the structure of governance initiated at the local level would require state action.

What the States Can Do

School boards exist because state governments choose to authorize them. Under the U.S. Constitution, education is a reserved power of the states, but all states except Hawaii have chosen to delegate substantial policymaking and operational decisions to local school boards. It is time for the states to wipe the slate clean with respect to school board charters. Many of the issues that school boards spend needless time on are required or implied by state law. As state roles increase and as state policies turn to school-based management that bypasses school boards, both their roles and functions cry out for re-thinking.

Many of the issues that school boards spend needless time on are required or implied by state law. As state roles increase and as state policies turn to school-based management that bypasses school boards, both their roles and functions cry out for re-thinking.

State actions to address the governance issue can be minimal, i.e., strategies to improve the functioning of school boards as they are currently constituted. States can enact reforms which redefine roles, responsibilities and the scope of activities for local governing bodies—basically recreating local governance. States might also encourage local initiatives in governance reform through enabling legislation (with possible incentives) and/or state policy which provides a process for granting waivers where necessary for locally initiated reforms or new governance structures. The federal government should also promote local flexibility by granting appropriate waivers in its programs. We believe that the governance problems, particularly in the urban districts, require restructuring the governance function. We also believe that there are many localities which if encouraged, or even required to initiate local dialogues about expectations and performance of the governance function, would identify productive changes for local governance. Further, such locally initiated reforms may be adequate, even desirable, to achieving effective governance for many school districts.

Restructure Local Governance: Establish Local Education Policy Boards

We recommend that states repeal all current laws and regulations that specify the duties, functions, selection, and role of school boards. The school board would be renamed the "Local Education Policy Board."[1]

States should repeal all current laws and regulations that specify the duties, functions, selection, and role of school boards.

These boards would be charged by state law or regulation to:

- hire a local chief executive officer or superintendent of schools. Any state laws mandating election of superintendents would be repealed. Our recommendations imply a significant change in the current board/superintendent relationship. The superintendent has considerable responsibility for helping the board to understand and develop policy. Both boards and superintendents need to understand the delicate balancing act that this relationship requires, and rethink the procedures and customs through which the relationship is conducted.
- approve the budget and spending priorities. Boards should establish policies for contracting and purchasing and hire independent auditors to review the execution of these policies.
- determine policies and guidelines for negotiating contracts with teacher organizations if collective bargaining is authorized under state laws.
- establish a strategic plan that includes long- and short-term goals, objectives, performance indicators, and pupil assessment systems. In large urban and suburban districts this plan would include substantial operating and implementation discretion for individual schools to meet board goals.
- approve curriculum frameworks in subject areas linked to the strategic plan. The result should be clear and coherent policies concerning what children should know and be able to do.
- establish staff development policies that will improve many aspects of teaching, including both subject matter and teaching strategies. Evaluations of staff development indicate that there is insufficient follow-up or coaching to

help teachers implement new staff development concepts. This does not imply that the staff development plan would be identical at each school site. We stress that the board's role is policy, not detailed implementation.

- systematically link other policies such as categorical funding, accreditation, and instructional supplies to the pupil outcomes and curricular frameworks. Boards should maintain a concern for equitable distribution of resources among schools in the district.
- serve as members of local children's policy boards (to be established by new state statutes), encompassing public and private agencies serving children from birth to age 18.

States should establish strict regulations concerning potential conflicts of interest and fund board self-assessment and development activities that focus on the board's policymaking performance.

- approve construction projects but not all contracts and change orders.
- in large local education agencies, formulate policies for more school-based management and school-site budget control. Boards should become supporters, enablers, and motivators for bottom-up changes and adaptations by sites of central district policies. Site-based management begins with school boards; decentralization will be overwhelmed unless technical and material help is provided to the sites by central authorities. Boards should encourage schools to implement a variety of distinctive missions and styles but also hold them accountable without dictating standardized operating procedures. Boards should hold periodic reviews of how well school sites are meeting district goals and their own site goals.
- convene community forums on major educational policy issues.
- utilize ombudsmen to hear citizen complaints and appeals and clearly explain procedures for citizens to follow. Parents see boards as the ultimate site of appeal for their concerns about schools, including the location of bus stops and street-crossing guards. Some boards spend hours listening to and dealing with these constituent issues, consuming a large part of their meeting

agendas. The board may be the final arbiter, but an ombudsman could settle many of these issues. As systems decentralize, a growing portion of such issues could be settled in the individual school.

- boards should be authorized and encouraged to appoint citizen/consultant study groups to review particular issues within the school system so that policy areas can have the benefit of extensive exploration before coming to the board.

State laws would specify the limits to the school boards' prerogatives and make clear what they *should not* do:

- boards should end their quasi-judicial responsibilities, and should *not* preside over student or employee grievances such as student suspensions. States should charter local mediation and arbitration panels to resolve complaints and disputes. States should allow local jurisdictions to appoint or elect members of these panels.
- states should relieve boards of their fiduciary responsibilities to approve contracts and purchase orders that are bid competitively. Small noncompetitive bids could also be eliminated from board agendas.
- while school boards should approve budget plans, they should not approve specific payments of expenditure items in approved budgets.
- boards need not approve all change orders in construction projects unless they have a major impact on board policy. For large projects, we recommend that school boards consider a "community building committee" that includes some board members as well as individuals from outside appointed by the board. This building committee could approve change orders and oversee construction, leaving more board time for educational policy.
- boards should not hire, fire, or promote specific personnel except for the superintendent and a few overall administrators at the top of the system. For example, boards should *not* interview prospective principals. These jobs should be filled according to the personnel

States should schedule school board elections co-terminous with other major state elections and require that a majority of school board members be elected at large but with a minority elected by sub-districts in large cities.

policies of the board. Boards should be notified of all appointments and conduct periodic reviews to ascertain whether board personnel policies are being followed. These board responsibilities should be modified for small school districts where there are only a few administrators; the board might approve them all.

- boards should not approve such detailed items as pupil field trips, interdistrict pupil transfers, specific staff development activities, and bus routes.
- boards should permit chairs to stay for more than one year so that experience in policy leadership can be enhanced.

States should mandate regular comprehensive self-assessment for all boards to include a board plan for improvement and assessment of achievement of these objective

We realize it is impossible to draw a specific line between policy and administration and that these specific recommendations may not fit precisely in all contexts. The purchasing thresholds for board review in a district like New York City, with a budget of several billion dollars, would be different from that in a rural one-school district. State law should specifically discourage board time being spent on routine administrative procedures. Boards should spend more time on oversight when it concerns implementation of their policies.

Although boards can gather information from community sources about the impact of their policies, they often need more systematic data concerning, for instance, the implementation of instructional policy. Are the board's desired policies reaching the classroom so that staff can produce useful changes? Boards could produce periodic reports on their progress toward reaching policy goals. Boards could use more comparative data on the performance of diverse school sites than is now commonly available.

Move State Policies Toward Local Policy Boards

State laws should create specific resources and procedures to prepare new school board members for their policymaking roles. We also recommend that states establish strict regulations concerning potential conflicts of interest. States should fund board self-assessment and development activities that focus on the board's policymaking performance. States should establish panels of experts that would be on call to school

boards requiring assistance in such areas as strategic planning, development of curricular frameworks, reviews of school-site performance, or staff development policies linked to curricular frameworks. The corporate community might serve as a source of support for board budget policy.

States could also help develop indicators and policies for early intervention if localities are not able to make the transition to education policy boards. States could select and support "masters"—state or national experts, school administrators, or experienced teachers—to facilitate local problem solving. The school board could request a master; or the state might, based on indicators of board performance and a due process procedure, recommend (but not require) that a local board bring in a master. The key concept is that the master would intervene *before* the board's policymaking process has broken down or the state takes over the district (as has occurred in New Jersey, Kentucky, and California).

States should also review statutes and regulations that unnecessarily impede boards' discretion in policymaking.

States should also review statutes and regulations that unnecessarily impede boards' discretion in policymaking. The California Education Code, for example, which fills five thick volumes, is cluttered with outmoded regulations and required duties for school boards, deflecting their role from policymaking and needlessly inhibiting local flexibility.

States could be particularly helpful in devising statewide indicators to be used to compare school district and site outcomes. These should include both pupil outcomes and measures of children's conditions (from birth to age 18), as well as readiness for school at age six. States should also recommend how localities can supplement these standard statewide indicators with indicators tailored to specific local contexts.

Develop State Policies To Improve School Board Elections

Because states regulate local election laws, it is necessary for states to revise statutes controlling local school board elections. We recommend that states:

1. schedule school board elections co-terminous with other major state elections

2. require that a majority of school board members be elected at large but with a minority elected by subdistricts in large cities.

Improve School Board Development

Empirical data collected by IEL and state school boards associations are clear. The culture of school boards does not incorporate assessing their governance performance regularly (or even sporadically for the majority of boards), nor attending to their development as corporate governing bodies. Urban boards are the most resistant to committing time to self-assessment and development. There are some states that now mandate a minimal number of hours of training for individual board members. This approach is totally inadequate. States should mandate regular comprehensive self-assessment for all boards to include a board plan for improvement and assessment of achievement of these objectives. States should also mandate some minimal developmental training for whole boards; it is in their collective functioning that boards show their most dysfunctional governance behaviors. Ideally, states would provide resources to support this mandate or at least provide resources for those districts where carrying out the mandate might be an undue financial burden. States should also allow board discussion of their self-assessment in closed meetings.

The culture of school boards does not incorporate assessing their governance performance regularly (or even sporadically for the majority of boards), nor attending to their development as corporate governing bodies

Require Joint Planning with Units of General Government and Other Agencies

The point has been made about the complex needs of an increasing percentage of the nation's students and the negative impact upon school success if these human and social needs are not met. States could require school boards, units of general government and other agencies to collect common demographic, needs and services data and to plan jointly to meet such needs. Further, the economic development interests of the states, as well as the localities, would be well served by a requirement that school boards be participating parties on local/regional economic development councils.

Encourage Local Reforms

The problems of the local governance function differ in character and severity among the nation's local school districts. We have recommended that states restructure local governance and establish Local Education Policy Boards, but we recognize that this will be politically difficult and will require time to accomplish. Legislation and regulations need to be developed and a campaign mounted to educate the public in order to create a political base for governance reforms. The following two suggestions for possible state actions might encourage local reforms either as a precursor to comprehensive state structural reforms, or in the aggregate, be a viable strategy to accomplish governance reforms in the most troubled districts. Enabling and encouraging locally initiated reforms might also provide valuable insights and strategies to inform ultimate statewide governance restructuring.

Legislation and regulations need to be developed and a campaign mounted to educate the public in order to create a political base for governance reforms.

Enabling Legislation

States could enact legislation enabling localities to change the structure of local governance in accord with locally determined problems and solutions. Such changes might range from redefining primary responsibilities of school boards and superintendents to merging education governance with general government. A community might even decide to establish a new governing body responsible for all public policy relating to children, youth and families. A community might want to experiment with eliminating the quasi-judicial role of school boards and establish a local mediation and arbitration panel. In order to encourage local experimentation, states might appropriate resources to support a local reform process either in deliberations or implementation. States could develop guidelines defining the state's parameters for true structural reforms, not only to guide localities, but also as criteria for possible state grants to support the governance reform process and implementation. We believe that community leaders in the most troubled school districts, if encouraged by states, will at least initiate a process to create structural governance reforms.

Mandated Local Dialogues

If, in the considered opinion of state policymakers, local governance is a deterrent to a state's interests in public education in many or key school districts, a state might enact legislation to require localities to enter into a reform process. Localities would be expected to define expectations for local governance within a framework of state expectations, assess local governance effectiveness against these expectations, and develop a plan to meet governance deficiencies. This strategy has the obvious merits of retaining a great deal of local determination while meeting a state's interest in developing more effective local governance.

Community leaders should initiate a local dialogue process to define expectations of local education governance and should include all community stakeholders in the public schools, as well as the current school board and superintendent.

What Localities Can Do

School boards probably would be justified in saying that at some point the "rules" have been changed about the proper role of a representative, usually elected, governing body and the expectations of individual members. There is no question that the school boards most visibly troubled and which are condemned for the most dysfunctional behaviors are those whose members' practice the mirror theory of representative government. Given a society that has become a collection of special interest groups and population subgroups who feel or have been accorded entitled status, it is not surprising that members of urban and changing suburban school boards believe their primary responsibility is to represent these disparate constituencies. Consequently, these boards do not, as corporate governing bodies, exercise risk-taking and boundary-crossing leadership necessary for education reform.

School boards are most frequently condemned for not providing enlightened and far-sighted leadership and for their dysfunctional, indeed obstructive, intra-board conflicts and political compromises which give no consistent strong policy direction to the school system. Expectations of education governance need to be discussed openly and defined again to produce a new framework for the governance function.

Initiate Local Governance Reform

We recommend that school boards, or those among key community leaders who can "call the meeting," initiate a local dialogue process. Its initial agenda would be to define expectations of local education governance and assess the structure and practices of education governance against community-defined expectations. This process should include all community stakeholders in the public schools, as well as the current school board and superintendent. If a school board will not participate and key community leaders wish to initiate such a process, we recommend that the dialogue go forward. Local governance can only change if the community is clear about its expectations and takes steps to assure that those governing the schools are selected with a commitment to meet a community's expectations.

The next step in locally initiated governance reform/improvement is to determine what must change and how change can be accomplished to assure that the structure of governance meets the expectations and defined roles and responsibilities. Such a process may result in minimal changes, e.g., simply reaching community consensus on expectations may be sufficient in some localities, or may produce recommendations for major change in the local governance structure.

We recommend a facilitated community process, with initiators of the process gaining the commitment of resources from local/regional foundations and/or corporations to support development of an action plan, if the process proceeds to action. The process should not be hurried and should incorporate strategies to communicate and receive input from the larger community at each juncture. Further, the stakeholders in the dialogue should begin with full awareness of general public ignorance or confusion about the roles and functions of school boards; public apathy about governance; and the fact that many among the public, particularly in urban districts, want school board members who will promote their special interests and respond to their individual concerns. In short, there is a great need for a major effort to educate the public about the governance and leadership functions for public education, just as there is about the level to which public education must be raised in the nation.

In short, there is a great need for a major effort to educate the public about the governance and leadership functions for public education, just as there is about the level to which public education must be raised in the nation.

Contract Out the Operation of Schools

School boards could determine to restructure themselves from policymaking bodies operating schools into policymaking bodies contracting out the operation of schools. There is nothing to preclude a school board from divesting itself of the operational functions. Boards could establish overall goals, the framework of policies, and expected outcomes and exercise oversight of achievement of the goals and compliance with boards' policies. A board could hire a CEO to administer those functions the board has retained and to provide administrative oversight of all contracts. The research, evaluation and technical assistance functions for the contractually operated schools could also be carried out externally to a board. Boards could retain certain fiscal functions, but these would be limited to collecting taxes (in fiscally independent school districts), administering monies supporting any centralized functions, and determining contract amounts and contractors' fiscal compliance. School boards could also contract out management of the new operational structure.

Too many school boards are spending only a fraction of their deliberative and policymaking time on true education issues and even less time on educating their constituents about local, state and national educational issues and trends.

Initiate Board Self-Improvement

School boards could initiate strategies to improve their effectiveness. We have stated our belief that self-restructuring of any magnitude for any institution, particularly a political institution, is virtually impossible. School boards that are not really dysfunctional but are not operating efficiently and are receiving some signals that performance could be improved should initiate reform strategies. Board-initiated reforms would result in generating enormous political currency and support within localities.

Commit to Self-Assessment and Development

The point has been made about boards' lack of commitment to assessing their performance and developing their capacity to govern well as a corporate governing body. Self-assessment and consistent attention to training and development needs are absolutely minimal requirements for improving governance performance. Boards should seek input from their superintendents and from their communities—these perspec-

tives are essential for boards. They should determine actions and activities for improvement and communicate these and their progress to their communities.

Determine Priorities

IEL's 1985–86 national study of school boards, more recent board self-assessment data, and empirical data from superintendents, along with media reports over time confirm that too many school boards are spending only a fraction of their deliberative and policymaking time on true education issues. Boards spend even less time on educating their constituents about local, state and national educational issues and trends. Self-assessment and perhaps external observation and analysis will help boards understand that what they spend time upon determines their priorities, not boards' rhetoric.

Establish Outreach to General Government and Other Agencies

Unmet human and social needs of students preclude students' achieving learning objectives and successfully completing school. School boards should take the leadership initiative to organize planning and action with general government and other agencies to meet these needs. Exercise of leadership and participation in collaborative community action requires time—time that will only be found if boards let go of involvement in administrative operations of the school district.

Improve Board-Superintendent Relationship

Both boards and superintendents need to be more forthright in their crucial relationship and decide there is a mutual responsibility to negotiate, develop and sustain it. Boards and superintendents rarely anticipate stresses on the relationship when a new superintendent takes over. School boards should invest in supportive assistance and expertise for superintendents during their first-year transition into a school district. Boards should assure that time is devoted in the first year to open dialogue and that there are checkpoints in the new relationship to work through any signs of trouble. Ongoing board-

Both boards and superintendents need to be more forthright in their crucial relationship and decide there is a mutual responsibility to negotiate, develop and sustain it.

superintendent relationships also suffer from lack of regular attention. Boards should anticipate issues that could cause stress in the working relationship and practice early intervention. IEL data substantiate that few boards have processes for resolving conflicts with their superintendents (let alone among board members) or seek input from their superintendents about board behaviors/actions that affect the relationship. Boards should assume the responsibility for assuring there is continuous sorting of board and superintendent roles and should develop the governing sophistication to deal with necessary ambiguities in the roles. Finally, boards should institute an effective evaluation process for their superintendents based upon mutually agreed to objectives and criteria for determining how they have been achieved.

The governance function must be addressed directly to achieve a vastly improved education system in this nation. The roles and responsibilities of governance should be considered in their entirety in relation to newly defined expectations of governance

Summary and Next Steps

The governance of public education will change, in one way or another, by the end of this decade. As we have pointed out, there are many new players in the public education arena, nationalizing (not federalizing) trends to establish and assess achievement of elevated standards in teaching and learning, and initiatives, e.g., charter schools, contracting for school operation, limited voucher plans and school-based management/governance, all of which are, even now, having an impact on the central governance function in school districts. In addition, many school boards, in urban areas in particular, are not exhibiting the capacity to govern well or to provide the necessary leadership for public education.

Governance is not a neutral variable in the education reform equation. We believe that the governance function is so central to achieving a vastly improved education system in this nation that reform of governance must be addressed directly. Reform of governance may be the most difficult political task in education reform but the nation cannot construct a new public school system without transforming the institution of local school governance.

Governance reform will not be uniform across the nation, either in how reforms are initiated or in the reforms, themselves. However, states should not tinker at the edges or simply change one element within the totality of the governance

function. The roles and responsibilities of governance should be considered in their entirety in relation to newly defined expectations of governance. Anything less comprehensive or extensive will accomplish little.

There will be states that will not take on the governance issue in the near future due to pressing and politically volatile problems, e.g., financial problems, or difficulty in developing necessary political coalitions to enact legislation. While we urge states to initiate comprehensive governance reform, we also urge school boards and/or local communities to initiate reforms. All states should encourage such local experimentation.

This book is not intended to be just another report, but rather a guide for action. We have attempted to provide concrete suggestions to states and localities for specific strategies to reform education governance. The authors are initiating follow-through work with states and localities. We invite our readers to join in the task.

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END NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. See, for example, National Center for Public Health of Columbia University, *A Statistical Profile of Our Poorest Young Citizens,* 1990;*American Demographics,* "How Children Are Changing," February, 1992; and Harold L. Hodgkinson, *A Demographic Look at Tomorrow* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Educational Leadership, 1992).
2. William A. Firestone, Sheila Rosenblum, Beth D. Bader, and Diane Massell, *Education Reform from 1983-1990: State Action and District Response* (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 1991).
3. National Governors' Association, *Keys to Changing the System: Report of the Action Team on the School Years,* 1992.

CHAPTER THREE

1. William A. Firestone, Susan Fuhrman, and Michael W. Kirst, *The Progress of Reform: An Appraisal of State Education Initiatives* (New Brunswick, N.J.: CPRE, 1989).
2. See Frederick Wirt and Michael Kirst, *Schools in Conflict* (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan, 1989).
3. See Susan H. Fuhrman and Richard Elmore, "Understanding Local Control in the Wake of State Education Reform," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 12 Spring 1990, pages 82–96.
4. Allan R. Odden and David D. Marsh, *How State Education Reform Can Improve Secondary Schools* (Berkeley, Calif.: Policy Analysis for California Education, 1987).

5. Fuhrman and Elmore, "Understanding Local Control," page 88.
6. Tom Peters and Alan Waterman.
7. This section relies on the advice of Professor James W. Guthrie, University of California, Berkeley.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Henry F. Johnson, *A Brief History of Canadian Education* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, Ltd., 1968).
2. Mary Wamack, *A Common Policy for Education* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1988).
3. Source for description of Japanese education governance structure: *International Handbook of Educational Systems, Vol. III: Asia, Australia, Latin America,* ed. Robert Lowen and Martin McLean (Chichester [Eng.:]: John Wiley, 1984).
4. John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, *Politics, Markets, and American Schools* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1990).

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2. _____, *School Boards: Strengthening Grass Roots Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986).
3. John Carver, "Recommendations to the West Virginia Legislative Oversight Commission on Educational Accountability" (C armel, Ind.: Carver Governance Design, January, 1991).

CHAPTER SIX

1. This discussion of Local Education Policy Boards expands upon recommendations in *Facing the Challenge,* a report by The Twentieth Century Fund-Danforth Foundation Task Force on School Governance.

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